

Hunter's Guide

SEASON 1



Welcome, my curious carrion. Step lightly now you've just crossed into the treeline. The Hunter's Guide opens, and with it, the first of many unkind revelations.

Season One is a collection of field dispatches and forbidden dossiers, stitched together from what remains of those brave or foolish enough to step beyond the safety of the floodlights. Eight entities. Eight horrors. Each encountered in the lonely wilds where no signal reaches, and no scream echoes back.

We expose the Gristle Mare, a beast that rides the fog, hunting those who wander too far from the trail. We follow with the Meat-Bots, once tools of war, now scavengers of flesh and faulty memory. There are the Threadmouths, creatures of silence and mimicry, weaving traps from stolen voices... and, of course, the Smart Pets, oh, those poor beasts! Once companions. Now cyborg revenants, obedient only to the static that whispers commands in the dark.

You'll meet the Possessed, hollow meat puppets with something else at the wheel... and encounter Unreality itself, a sickness of the world that edits time like a faulty film reel. We venture deeper still into The Corruption of the Wilds, where even the trees bleed, and finally, we close with a failed evolution a biological betrayal known only as The Flesh Rejects the Change.

Take notes, dear listeners. Keep your knives clean and your exits memorized.

Because the Guide does not offer protection.
It only shows you what's out there.

—Dr. M
Curator, Asylum Ink
Hunter, Survivor... Occasional snack.





THE FLESH REJECTS THE CHANGE

CODENAME: Quatall

CATEGORY: Aberrant Bioform Contamination / Sentient Infection

LOCATION: Active clusters in remote Drift Zone sectors

Notable spillovers near Continuum black sites

One confirmed breach: Shallow Pine Extraction Corridor

Major cities remain unaffected—for now

THREAT LEVEL: Severe

SUMMARY: Quatall-infected hosts don't rot. They reform. Under control of a parasitic mycelial colony, the infected are reconstructed using their own tissue repurposed into mimicry machines powered by corrupted memory. They walk. They talk. But what speaks through them is not human.

Observed Behaviors:

Speech echoes thoughts never spoken

Partial memory retention with fragmented logic

Capable of basic traps, group tactics, and emotional manipulation

Exposure Symptoms:

Neural collapse within hours

Vocal cords laced with living thread

Marrow breakdown and internal fluidization

Persistent nightmares—even in survivors

STATUS: Active / Spreading - Quatall is no longer confined to spores.



Ah... you've returned. Or perhaps you've merely stumbled in, twitching and wide-eyed, drawn by the scent of rot and revelation. No matter. You're here now. Tell me, have you ever watched a man molt?



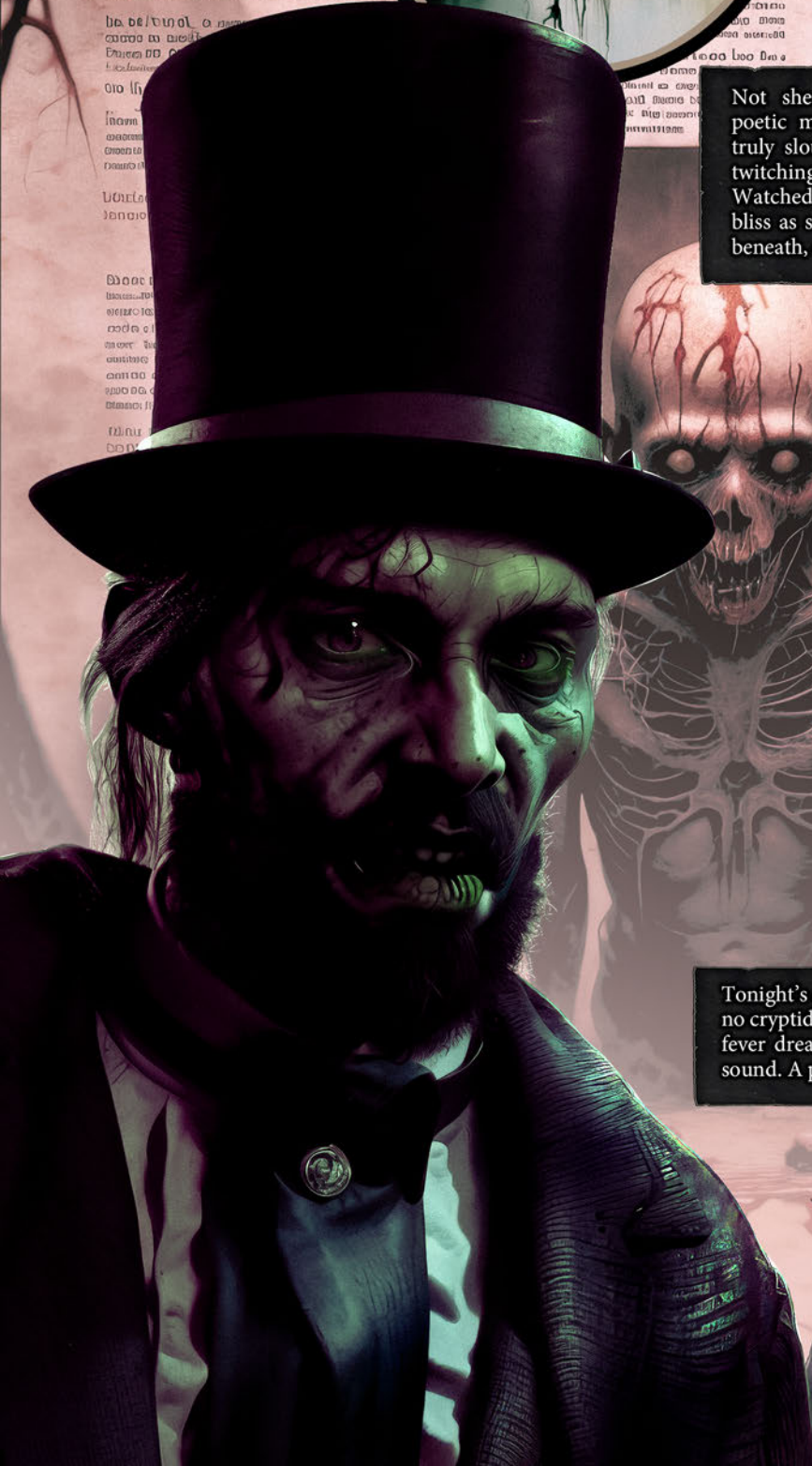
Figure 1: The specimen in its natural habitat.

The specimen was found in a dark, damp, and cluttered space, possibly a basement or a hidden room. It was found by a group of people who were investigating a series of strange occurrences in the area.

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Not shed his skin in some poetic metaphor, no. I mean truly slough off, in clumps of twitching, mucus-laced tissue. Watched him croon in fevered bliss as something else writhes beneath, eager to meet the air?

Then let us begin.



Tonight's specimen is no myth, no cryptid born in a backwoods fever dream. It has a name. A sound. A presence. Quatall.



HUNTER'S GUIDE:

Quatall

The Quatall Pathogen is no generous patron; it is a cruel artisan, a bio-alchemical tyrant that reshapes its chosen with merciless precision. It sculpts not for beauty or benevolence, but for dominance, fashioning sinew, marrow, and mind into something wholly other.

Those who fail to withstand the crucible, whose frail human matter recoils from the transfiguration, are not spared. They are left behind, abandoned relics of aborted evolution. These are the Failed Ones, misshapen parodies of what might have been, their bodies mutilated by the unfinished work of the pathogen's hand.

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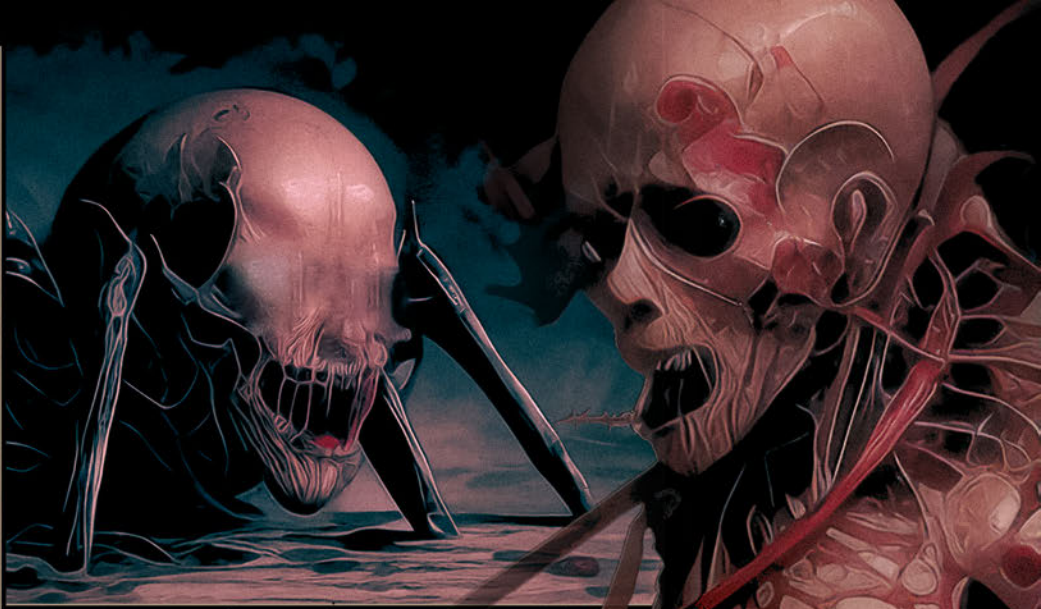
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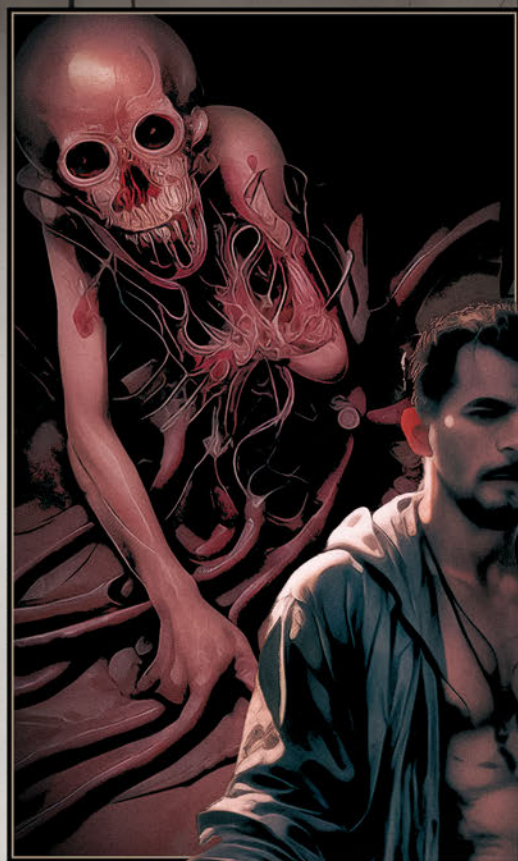


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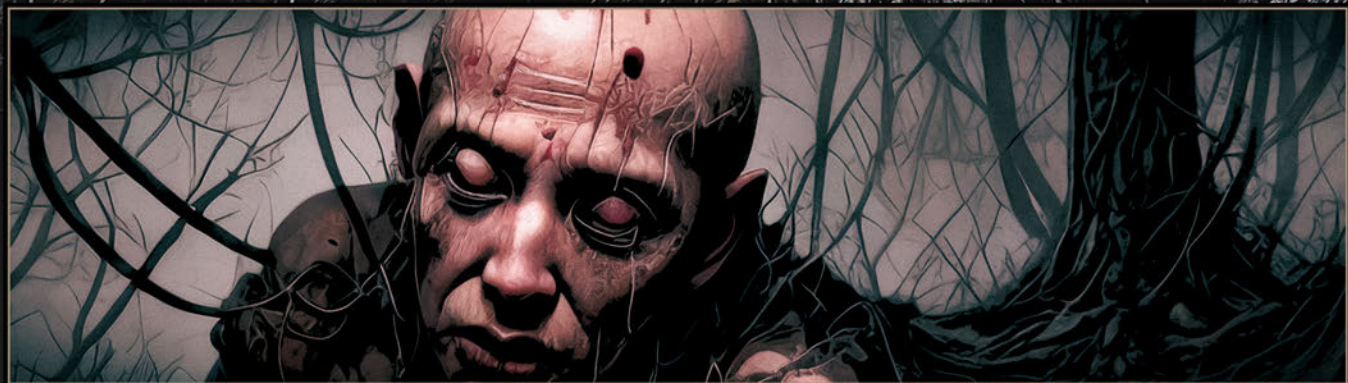


Their flesh is blistered and mottled, drawn tight over malformed frames. Bones jut from unnatural angles as if trying to escape. Tumors bulge and writhe beneath tissue thinned to translucence, and in places, grotesque ridges of calcified, serrated plating hint at the Quatall form that nearly was; evidence of a metamorphosis interrupted.



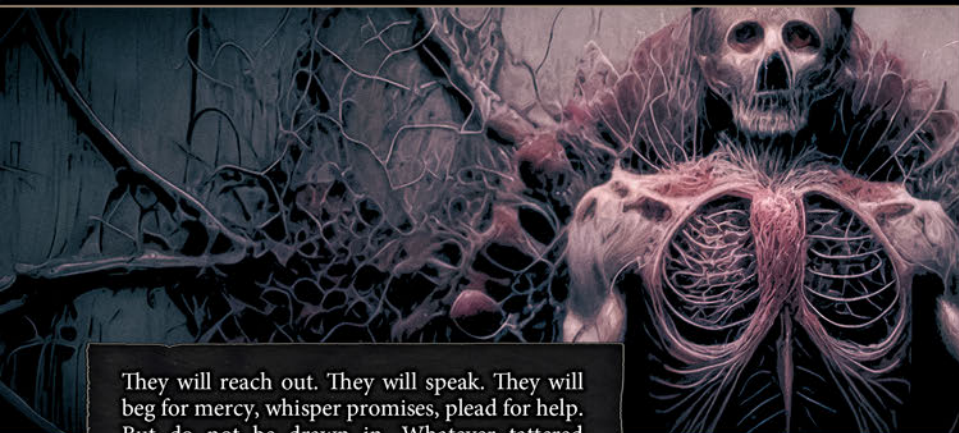


But let no one mistake these broken creatures for the sluggish, slack-jawed dead of archaic horror tales. They are alive, and in agony. The pain never ceases. It consumes them, hollows them out, and drives them to wild, unrelenting spasms of violence. Some have surrendered entirely to the torment, lashing out without aim or reason, their only instinct the spreading of their affliction.





Others, more dangerous still, remember. Behind their luminous, Quattall-blue eyes, you may catch the glimmer of something human, smothered beneath layers of pain and madness.



They will reach out. They will speak. They will beg for mercy, whisper promises, plead for help. But do not be drawn in. Whatever tattered remnant clings to consciousness within them is not asking for salvation, it is luring you closer.



FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

They Begged Me to Kill Them



At first, I mistook them for survivors.



Their forms were draped in rags, torsos trembling with feverish convulsions, yet they still bore the tragic semblance of humanity.



Pale hands reached out from the smoke, fingers twitching with unnatural spasms, and their mouths worked through trembling lips to shape words nearly devoured by distortion.

"Help us," one rasped, a woman, perhaps, though the sound was thick with phlegm and something else... something wet and alive. The plea gurgled from her throat like oil forced through a broken valve. "Please."

They are not mistakes.

not mistakes.

warnings are warnings.

I hesitated, a step from compassion, and that's when I saw her.



She was hunched against the jagged wreckage of a collapsed structure, her frame shuddering beneath a veil of soot and shadow. At first I thought she was crouching in pain, but then I saw it, her spine had ruptured outward in jagged arcs, as if her back had attempted to bloom.

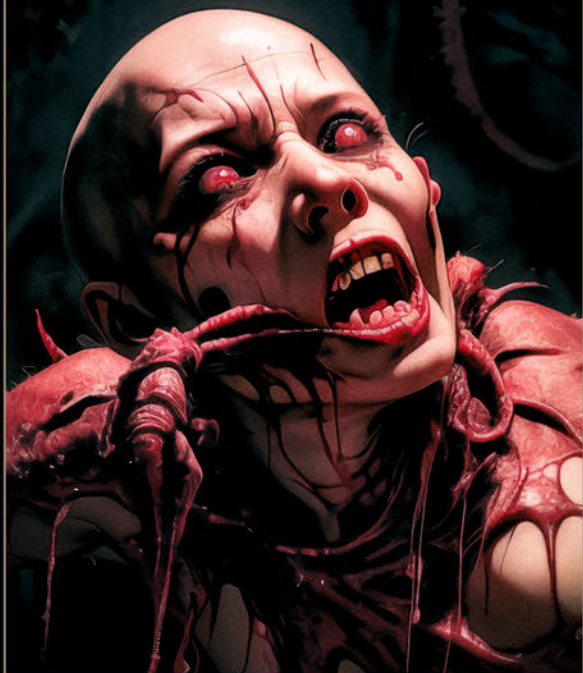


Her ribs had curled open like insect wings frozen mid-metamorphosis, twitching as if uncertain whether to close or fly. She turned her head toward me, rotating far beyond any natural limit, vertebrae popping like wet knuckles, and offered a smile stretched too wide across a face still trying to remember how to wear one.

Then they moved.



Those who still possessed legs that could bear weight lunged forward, but it was not human motion, it was dragged, as if some unseen puppeteer had jerked their tendons taut. One collided with me, its hand, bone protruding from blistered knuckles, knocking my rifle aside with terrifying force. It tried to speak again, but the words emerged in bubbles from a throat that had half-sunken into the fused collarbone, gurgling with every breath like a drowning man trying to pray.



I fired. A full clip into its chest.

It made no difference.



Even as it crumpled, the meat beneath its flesh writhed, squirming in silent rebellion, desperate to reshape itself ...to finish what had begun.

And then she moved.



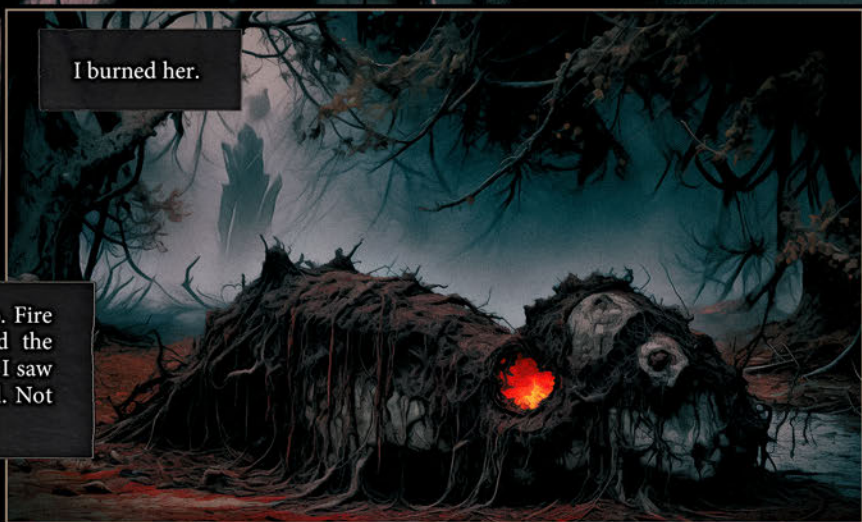
The woman with the ruptured back scuttled forward on limbs that had grown too long, knees bending wrong, hands dragging lines in the dust. Her voice slipped between dimensions, echoing not through the air but inside my skull.



"I tried to stop it," she moaned, eyes unfocused but fixed directly upon me. "I tried to keep him out."

I burned her.

I didn't think. I couldn't afford to. Fire was the only thing that silenced the shifting. And even then... I swear I saw something beneath her skin recoil. Not in pain... but in disappointment.



FINAL WARNING

No Cure. No Mercy.

There is no salvation here.

No antidote. No reversal. No absolution from what has taken root. The infection, if it can even be called that, is not a mere biological affliction. It is a corruption, primordial and deliberate, a rewiring of sinew and thought, a reprogramming of the self. The Quatall Pathogen does not mend or mutate, it rewrites, carving flesh into its own indecipherable script, warping cognition into something unrecognizable.





It does not love its hosts. It does not even acknowledge them. The end result is all that matters. Those who fail the transformation, whose bodies break before the reshaping is done, are cast aside like spoiled clay. Grotesque remnants. Echoes of what might have been. But even in that state of aberrant incompleteness, they serve a purpose.

They crawl, they bleed, they whisper. They radiate the contagion like dying stars shedding malignant light. They stagger toward the uncorrupted, arms open in grotesque mimicry of supplication, drawing the unwary closer, always closer, until escape is no longer possible. Until the change begins anew.

And the most appalling truth of all? Some want it.

Not because they are misled, no. Because they have seen what comes after. And it called to them.



Do not place your faith in military steel, in science, in prayer. No surgical precision or god-born miracle can undo what has already seeped into the world. The only response is fire, unrelenting and pure. Ammunition in abundance. A mind unclouded by sympathy. If you find yourself among them, if the air carries the wrong kind of silence and the light feels thick, you must act.

Do not hesitate. Do not listen. Do not pity.

The moment you acknowledge their suffering is the moment it enters you. Because what you see now, these mewling wrecks, these stunted horrors, is merely the first step.



The second step is worse. The second step is still out there. Waiting. Watching. And next time, it might not fail.



Oh, you hoped it would end there, didn't you? That the spasms would stop, the weeping would scab over, and the thing inside would go quietly into the dark. But you've seen the footage now. You've read the vitals. And you've heard...yes, heard the wet sound of something new being born through a borrowed body.



Quatall is not a disease. It is a decision. And somewhere out there, someone is making it for you. Sleep tight, darling patients. And if your dreams itch... don't scratch.

We'll be watching.

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THE FOREST GROWS WRONG

Hunter's Guide

CORRUPTION OF THE WILDS

CATEGORY: Environmental Anomaly / Entropic Bloom Event

LOCATION: Sector Theta-4, Exclusion Zone Verdant Reach

THREAT LEVEL: Crimson (Adaptive, Ecosystem-Level Threat)

STATUS: Active and Expanding Beyond Containment Markers

SUMMARY:

The wild is no longer wild. Trees that breathe. Roots that listen. Creatures built from both predator and prey. The Corruption doesn't rot—it remakes.

Initial biohazard theories no longer apply. This isn't infection—it's assimilation. Organic and synthetic elements fuse in impossible ways, and what emerges operates with hive-like coordination and predatory patience.

Scouting drones report massive fungal constructs, neural canopy growths, and sound-based lures that mimic voices of lost operatives. Survivors claim the forest speaks—offering choices no one should understand, and gifts no one survives.

Enter at your own risk. The Verdant Reach is watching.

And it wants you to take root.



"Once, the forests whispered lullabies. Now they scream."



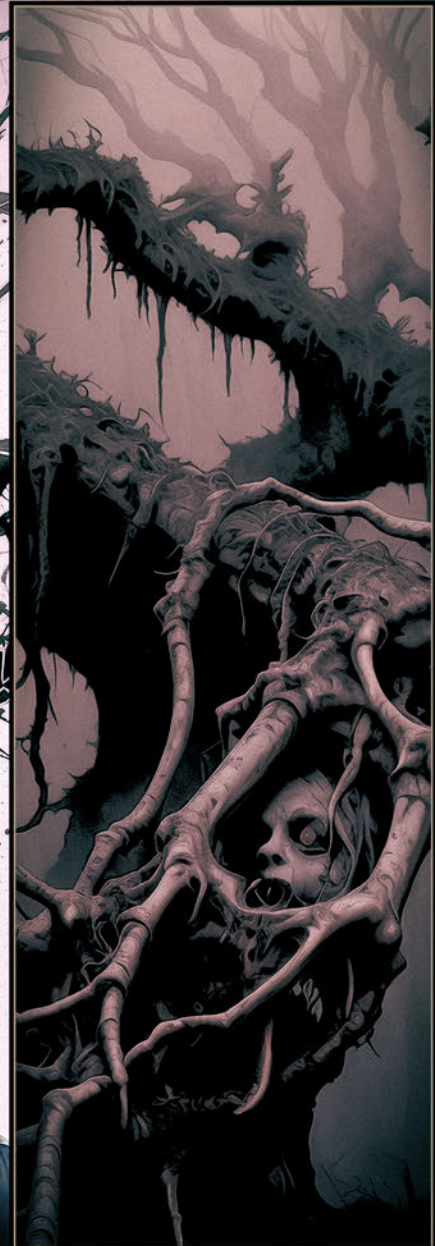
Ah, but you wouldn't hear it—not with human ears. Not until the moss begins to bleed, the roots coil like tendons, and the trees... start watching back.

What you'll witness tonight isn't a plague in the way your sterile sciences define it. No. This is rot with intent. Decay with direction. An intelligence—old, patient, and very, very tired of being ignored.



Call it nature's revenge, if that soothes you. I call it something worse.

I call it the Corruption of the Wilds."



HUNTER'S GUIDE:

The Corruption of the Wilds

The natural world, ever a theater of adaptation, bears no precedent for the grotesqueries birthed within the contaminated zones.

Here, evolution has not advanced—it has curdled. In these pockets of blighted earth, where the very soil whispers of wrongness, fauna succumb to transformations that defy biology and sanity alike.

Once-familiar deer now roam with jagged ossifications erupting from their flanks, bone turned outward like splintered armor. Birds take to the skies with too many eyes, their gaze roving in unnatural synchrony.

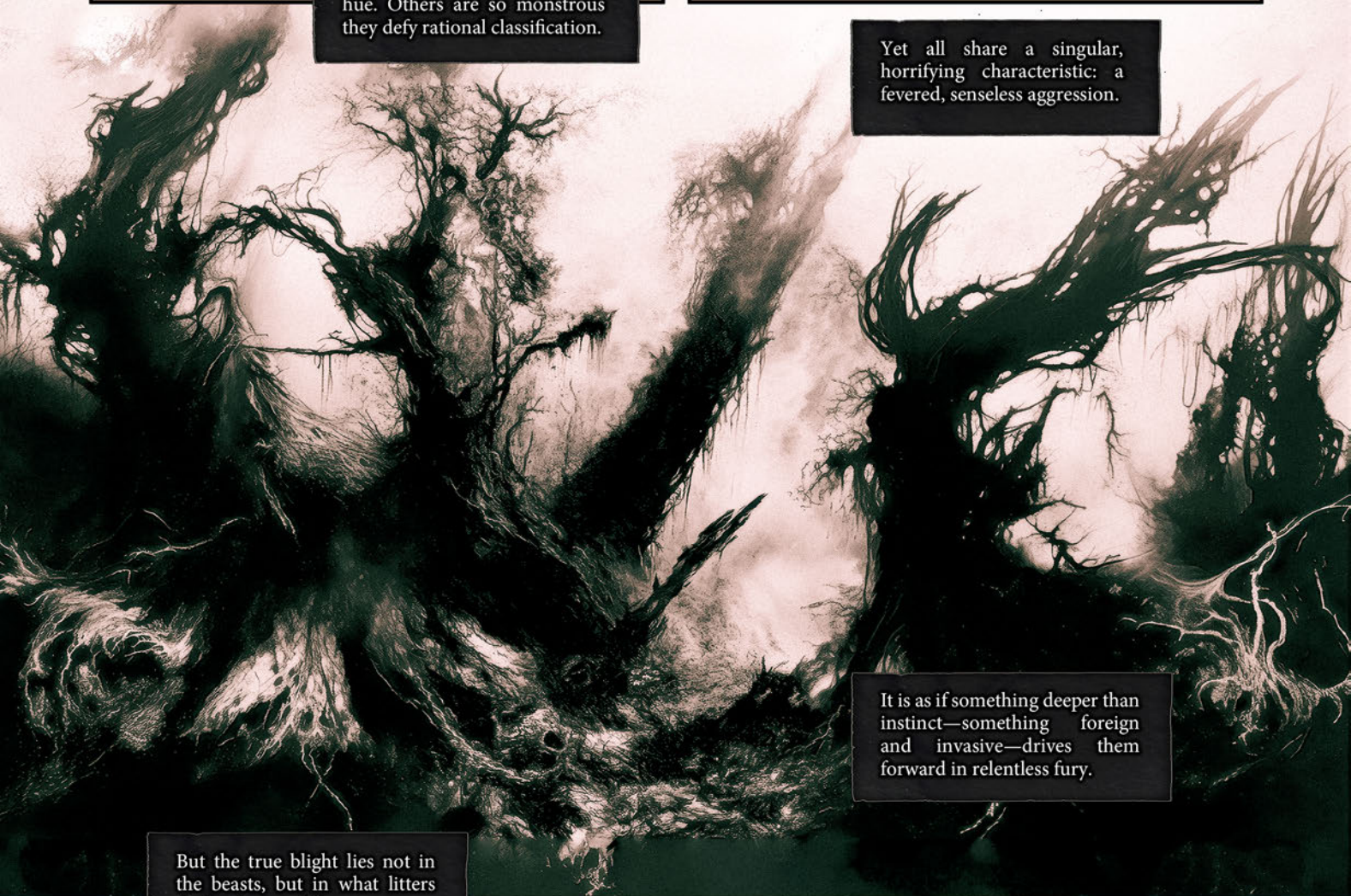
Wolves—if they can still be called that—move with spasmodic contortions, their limbs elongated and twisted, as though operated by marionette strings pulled from some unseen realm.



Some changes are subtle, skin-deep shifts in texture or hue. Others are so monstrous they defy rational classification.



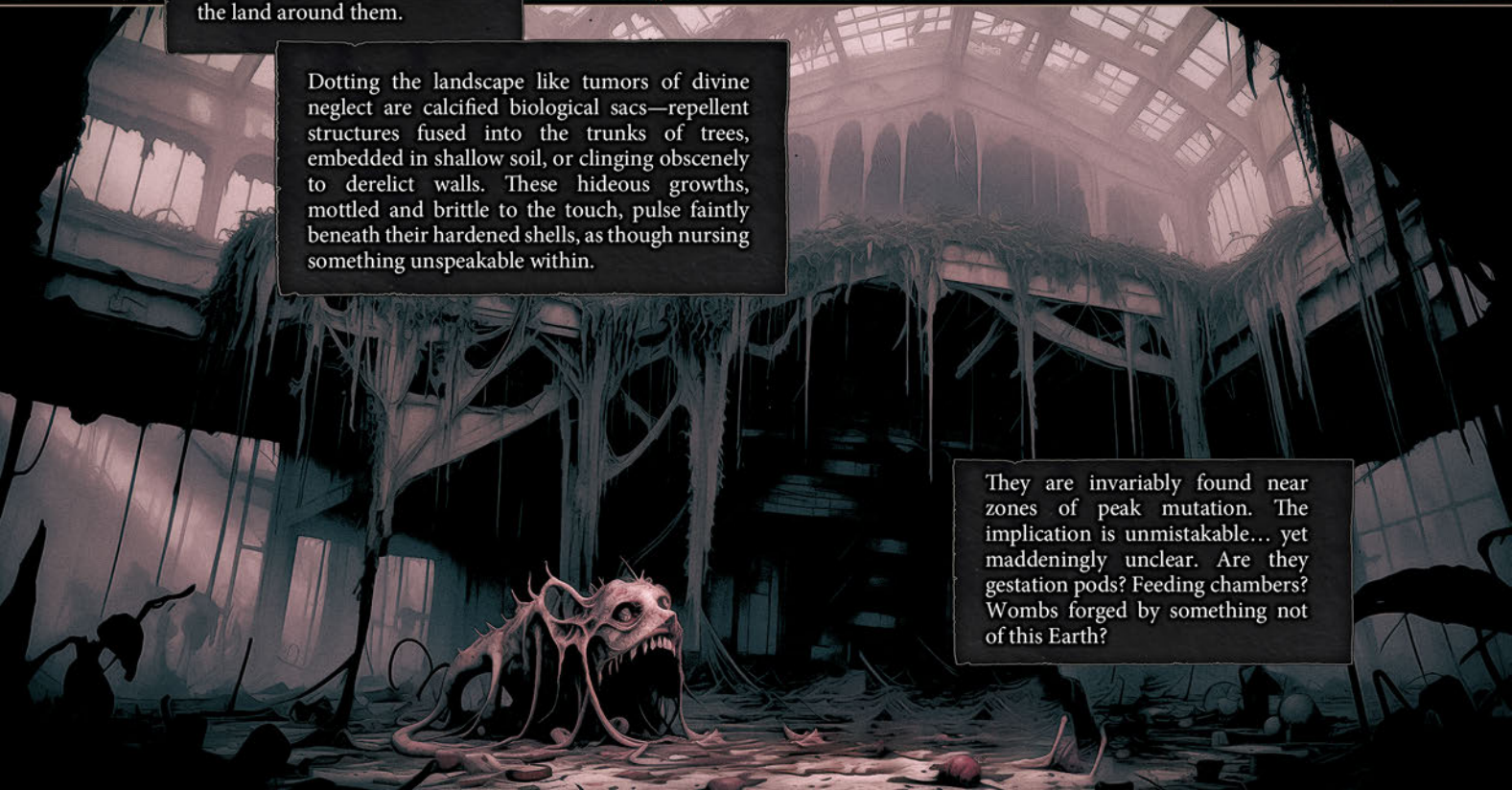
Yet all share a singular, horrifying characteristic: a fevered, senseless aggression.



But the true blight lies not in the beasts, but in what litters the land around them.

It is as if something deeper than instinct—something foreign and invasive—drives them forward in relentless fury.

Dotting the landscape like tumors of divine neglect are calcified biological sacs—repellent structures fused into the trunks of trees, embedded in shallow soil, or clinging obscenely to derelict walls. These hideous growths, mottled and brittle to the touch, pulse faintly beneath their hardened shells, as though nursing something unspeakable within.



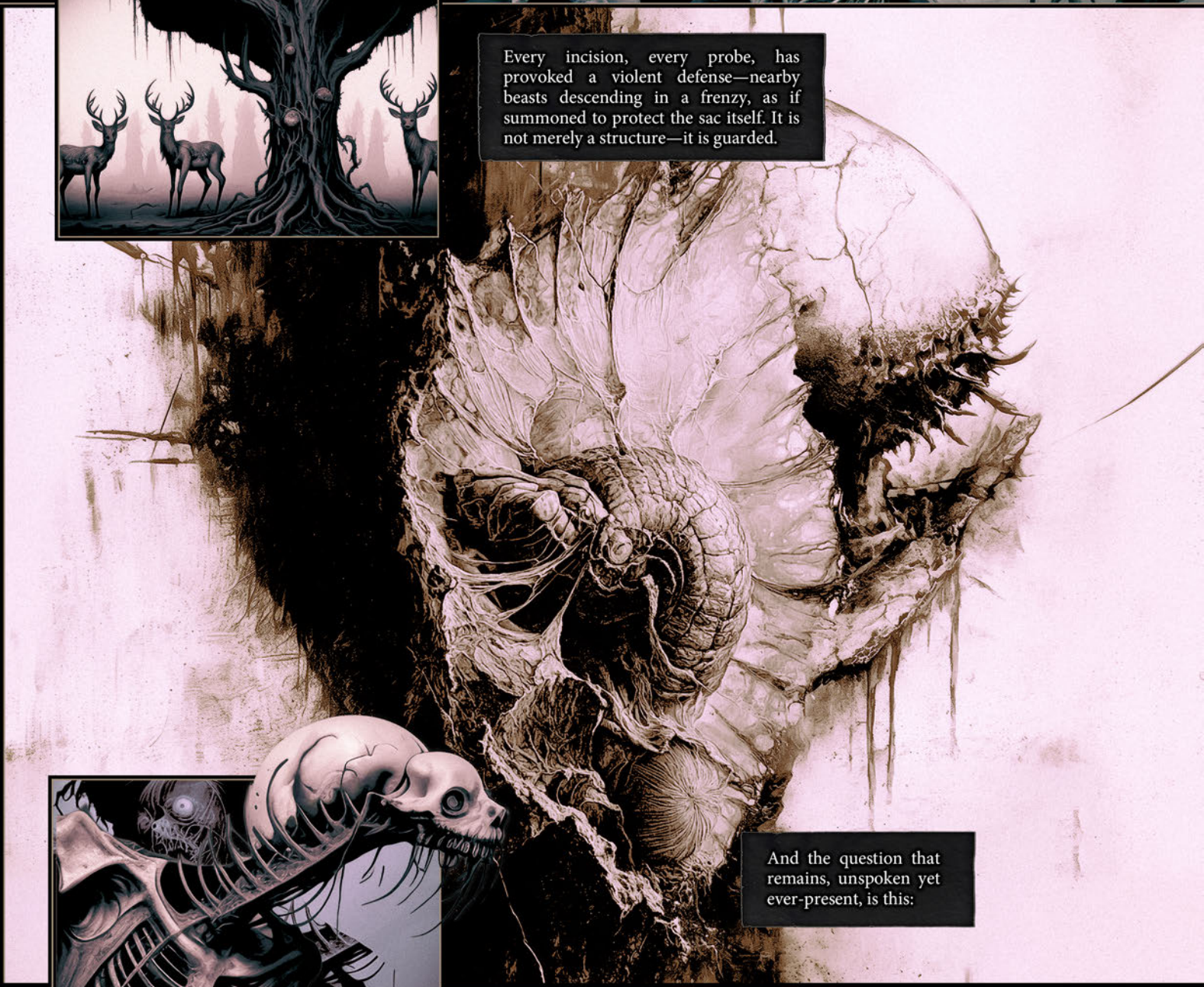
They are invariably found near zones of peak mutation. The implication is unmistakable... yet maddeningly unclear. Are they gestation pods? Feeding chambers? Wombs forged by something not of this Earth?



No attempt to pierce or extract
a specimen has succeeded.



Every incision, every probe, has
provoked a violent defense—nearby
beasts descending in a frenzy, as if
summoned to protect the sac itself. It is
not merely a structure—it is guarded.



And the question that
remains, unspoken yet
ever-present, is this:



If these are wombs... what,
in the name of all that is still
sane, is waiting to be born?

FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT:

It Watches Through Their Eyes

I found the first body slumped near the husk of the old ranger station. At first, I thought it was a fox—until I got closer.

Its pelt was a ragged tapestry of fur and flayed skin, patchworked by rot and raw exposure. The limbs... gods, the limbs were elongated, drawn out like soft clay pulled by unseen, eager hands. They bent in ways no living thing should bend.

But it was the eyes that stopped me cold.

They weren't fox eyes anymore. What stared back at me from that ruined skull was something far older, far colder. Ocular orbs set deep in blackened sockets, glassy and too human, and yet not. They watched me—I know they did. I felt them sliding across my skin as I crept past, a gaze not of instinct but of purpose. And then, as if on cue, the forest exhaled its last breath.



No wind.

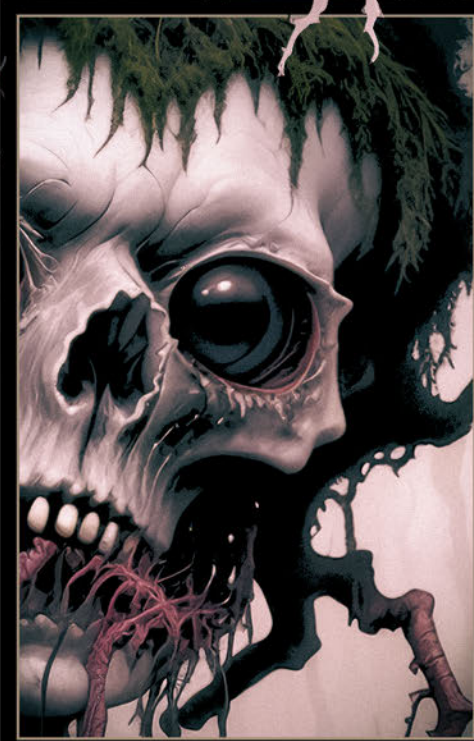
No whisper of leaves.

Just a thick, stifling
hush—pregnant with
malice.

That's when I saw it.

Clinging to the bark of a long-dead pine was
the sack. A grotesque chrysalis of
bone-white calcification, ridged and cracked
like some ancient marine fossil, yet
undeniably alive. Beneath its hardened shell,
something squirmed—a silhouette of fluid
motion, shifting as if in fevered sleep. I
should've fled. My instincts screamed it. But
curiosity... that cursed, undying itch...

I stepped closer.
The world reacted.



The forest lit up with eyes—dozens of them,
twin pinpricks glowing in the gloom.
Hidden beneath the ferns and brush, behind
brambles and bark. Deer, rabbits... and
others. Misshapen things I couldn't name.
They didn't move. They only watched.

Then I reached out—fool that I am.



My fingertip brushed the sack's surface. It shivered beneath my touch, and from somewhere deep within the woods came a sound—a wet, clicking cadence, like mandibles grinding against bone.

They charged.



The spell broke, and I ran—branches clawing at my coat, lungs burning, the pounding of warped limbs behind me. And in the chaos, just as I tripped and crashed through the underbrush, I heard it.



Not aloud. Not with ears.

A voice, in the hollow of my skull. Guttural, mirthless, impossibly old. Laughing.

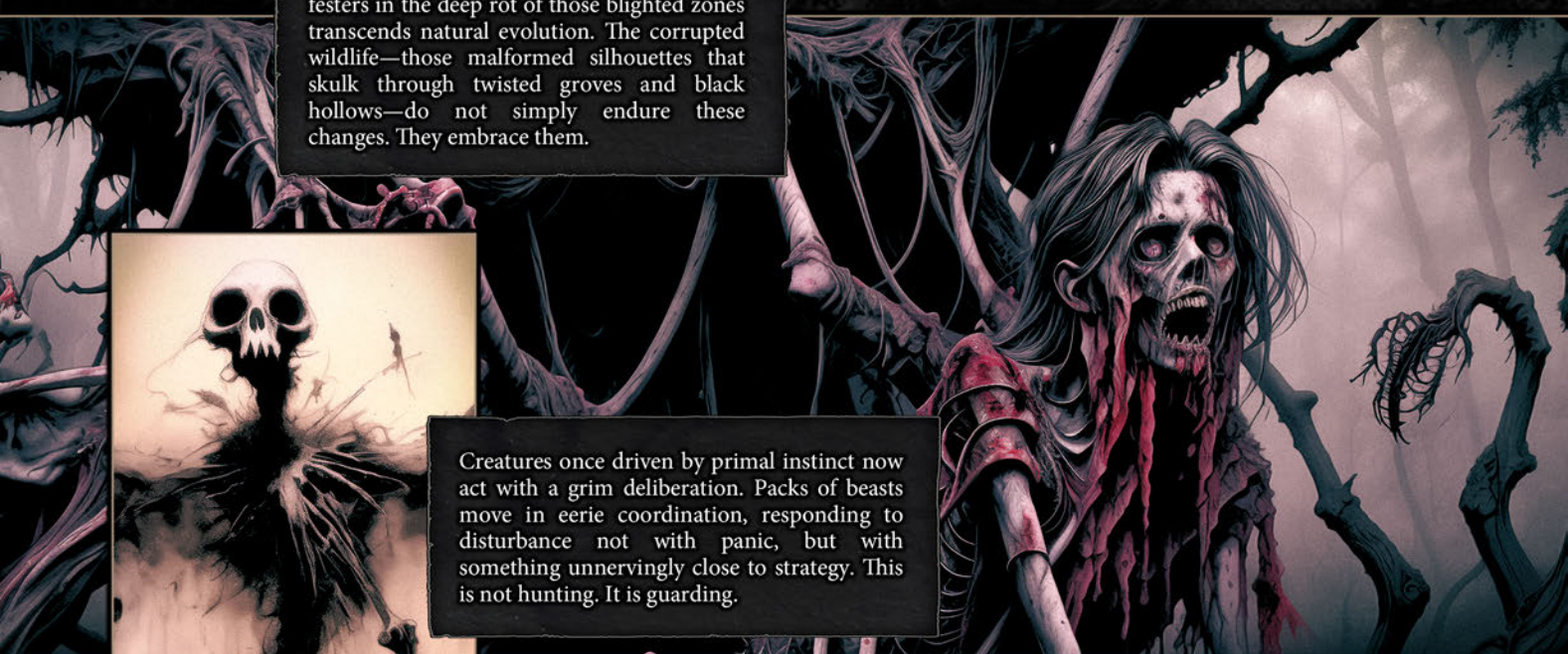


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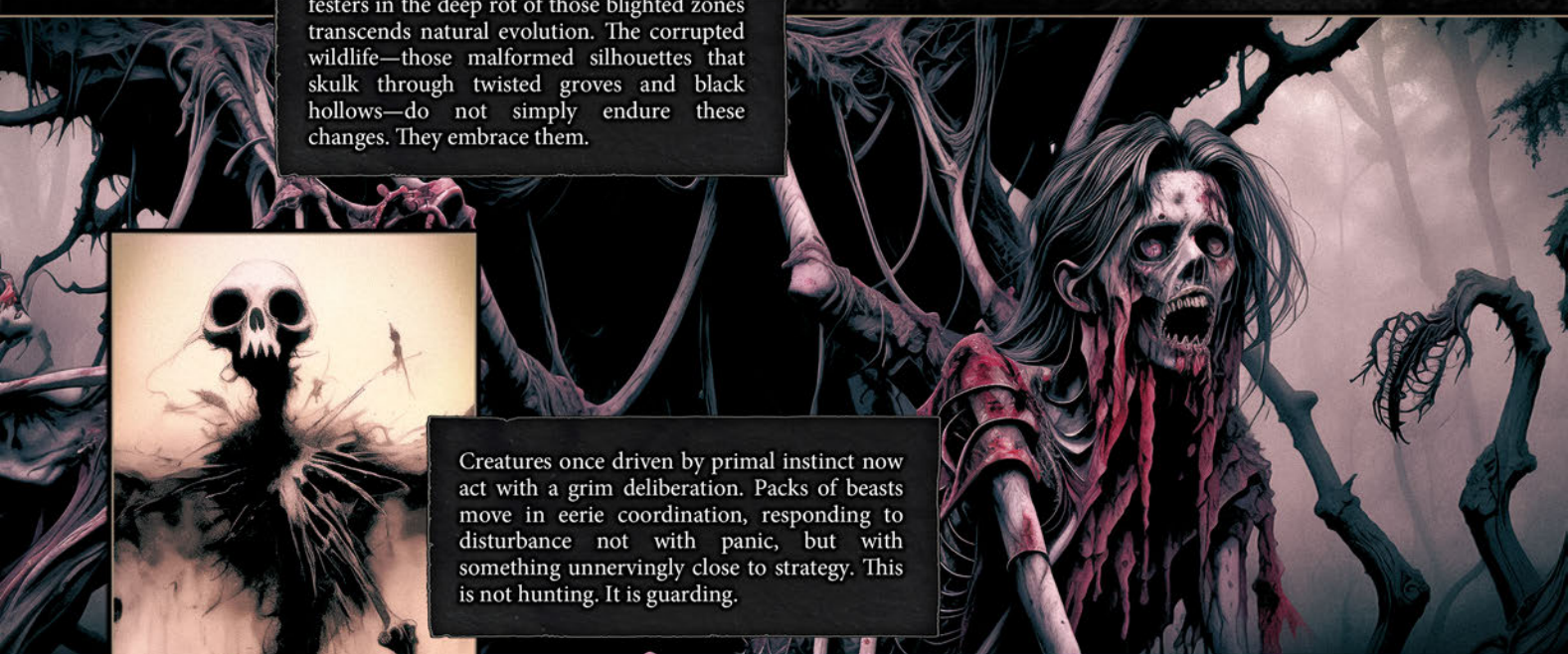
The Land Itself Is Changing



This is no mere dance of mutation. What festers in the deep rot of those blighted zones transcends natural evolution. The corrupted wildlife—those malformed silhouettes that skulk through twisted groves and black hollows—do not simply endure these changes. They embrace them.



Creatures once driven by primal instinct now act with a grim deliberation. Packs of beasts move in eerie coordination, responding to disturbance not with panic, but with something unnervingly close to strategy. This is not hunting. It is guarding.

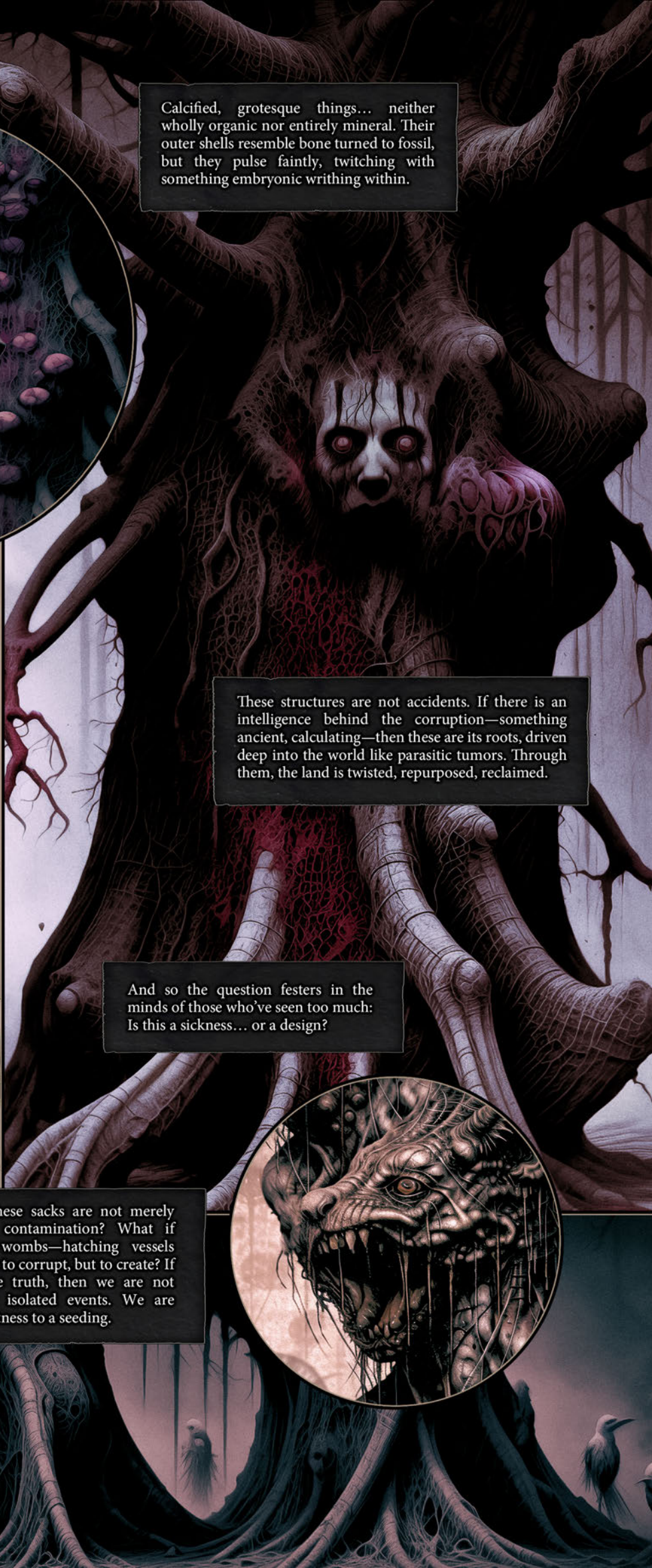


And what they guard—what pulses at the corrupted heart of these lands—are the sacks.





Calcified, grotesque things... neither wholly organic nor entirely mineral. Their outer shells resemble bone turned to fossil, but they pulse faintly, twitching with something embryonic writhing within.



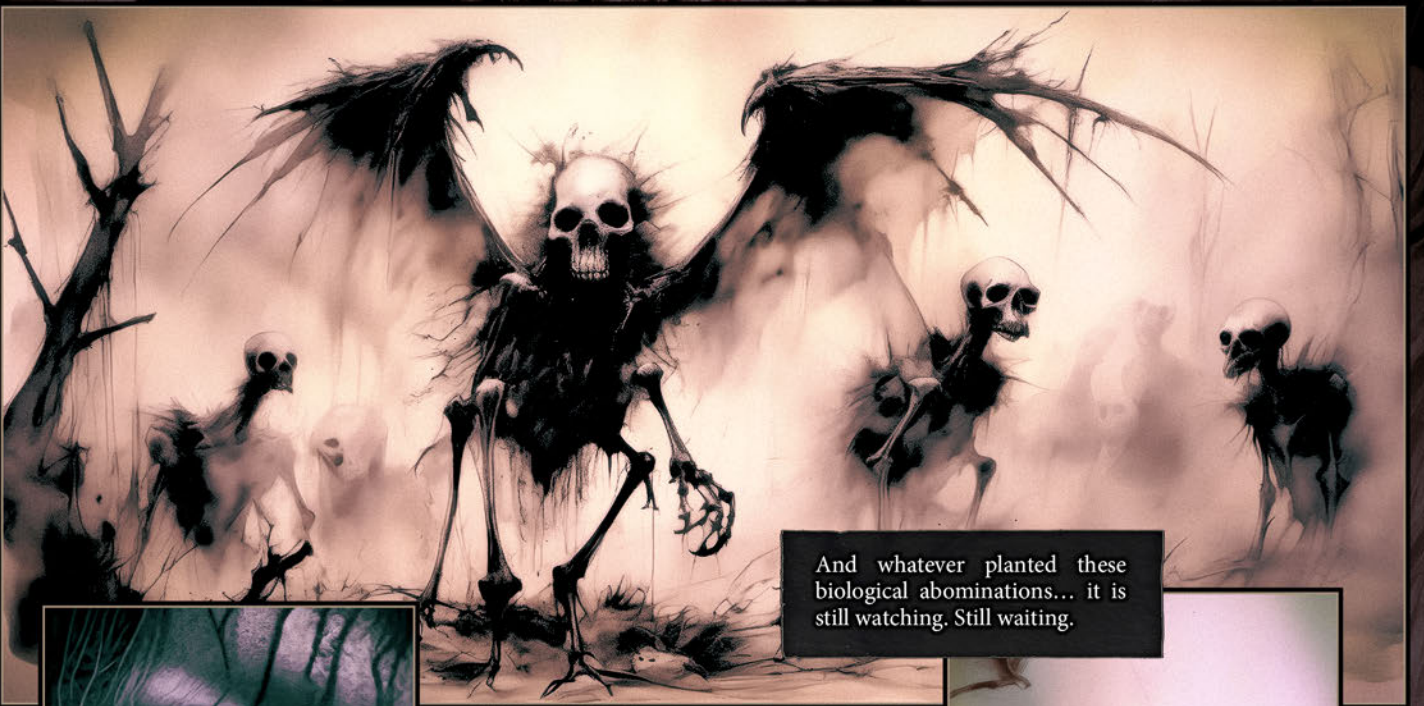
These structures are not accidents. If there is an intelligence behind the corruption—something ancient, calculating—then these are its roots, driven deep into the world like parasitic tumors. Through them, the land is twisted, repurposed, reclaimed.



And so the question festers in the minds of those who've seen too much: Is this a sickness... or a design?



What if these sacks are not merely spreading contamination? What if they are wombs—hatching vessels crafted not to corrupt, but to create? If that is the truth, then we are not witnessing isolated events. We are bearing witness to a seeding.



And whatever planted these biological abominations... it is still watching. Still waiting.



For what purpose, we cannot say. But with each passing cycle, the mutations grow more aggressive. More refined. Less like wild mistakes and more like... iterations.



If this is an experiment, then it draws toward its conclusion.

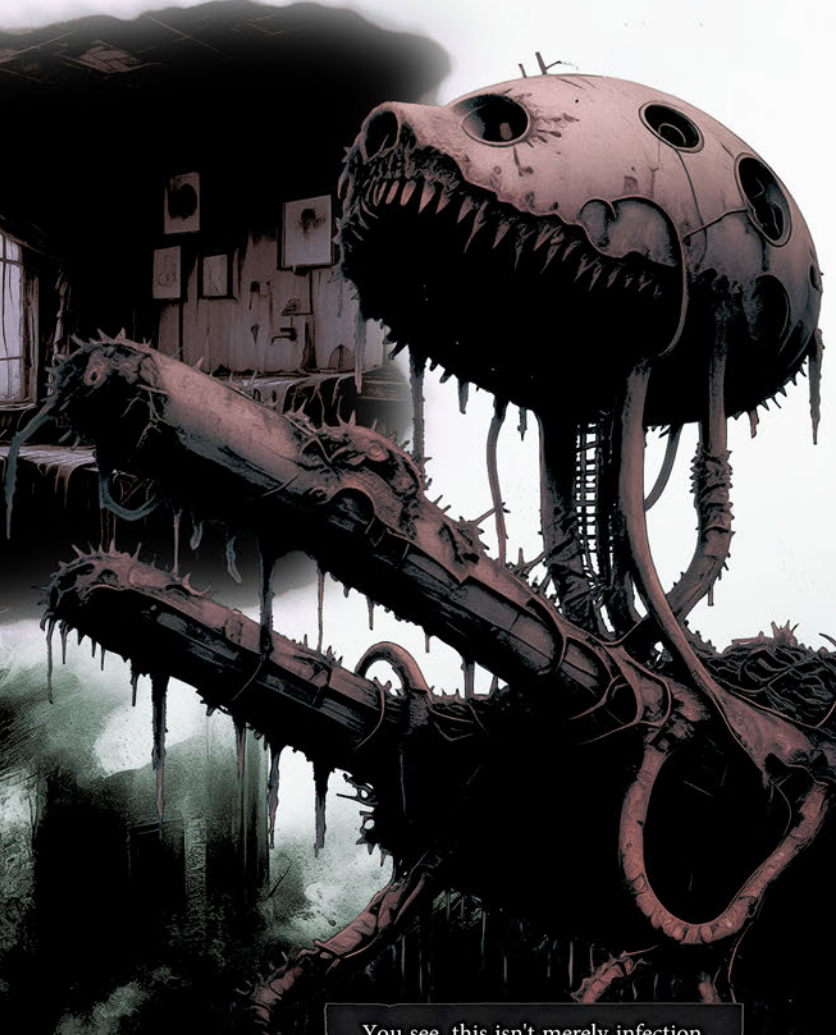


And when that final form is born... it may already be far too late to halt what follows.



"Do you feel it now? The itch in your lungs? The taste of metal beneath your tongue? That's not your imagination.

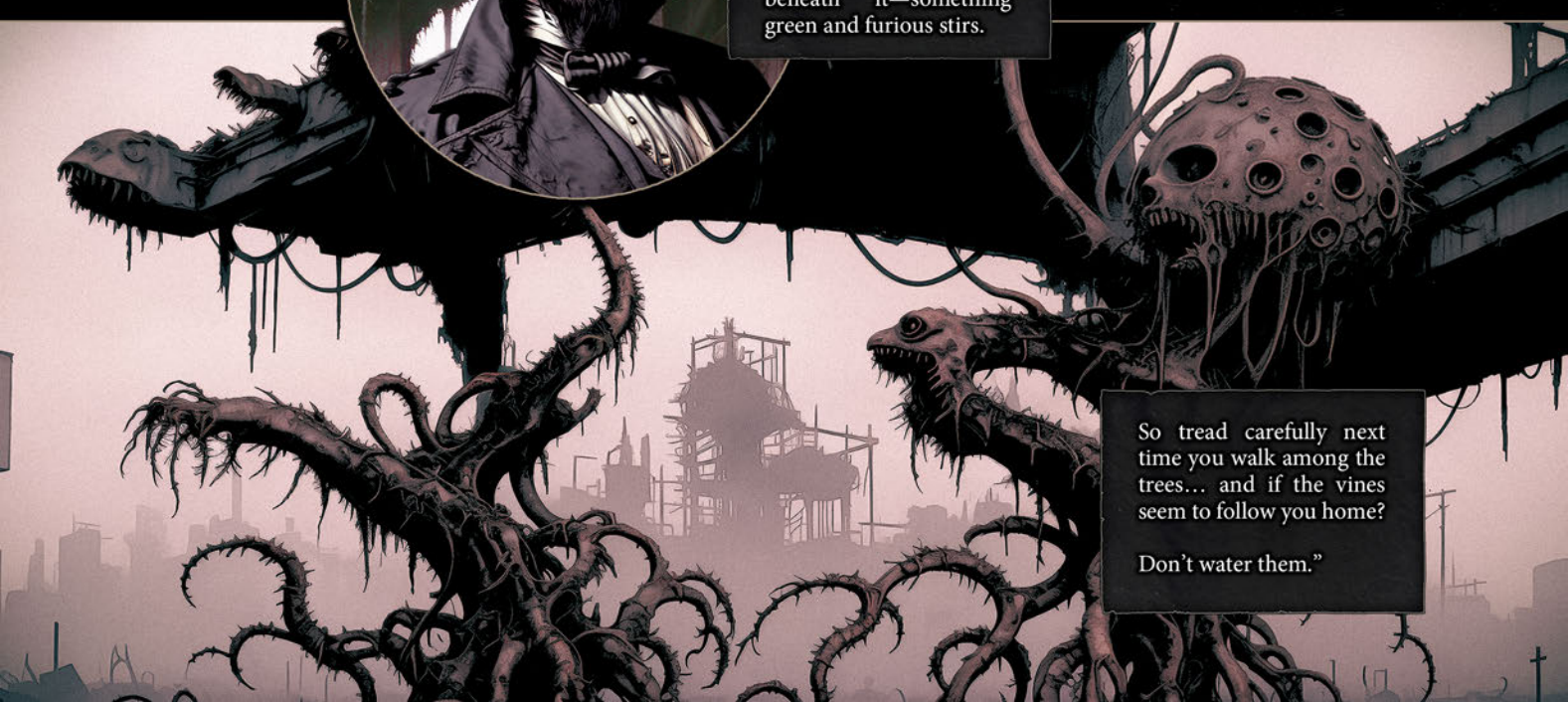
That's root-breath.



You see, this isn't merely infection. It's reclamation. A slow, sprawling reclamation of everything that once thought itself separate from soil.



Civilization is a thin bark, my dear patients. And beneath it—something green and furious stirs.



So tread carefully next time you walk among the trees... and if the vines seem to follow you home?

Don't water them."

THE HALLWAY FORGOT ITSELF

Hunter's
Guide

THE UNREALITY PHENOMENON

CODENAME: The Veil's Fracture

CATEGORY: Temporal-Perceptual Collapse Event / Reality Fracture

LOCATION: Variable / Conceptual - Initial outbreaks traced to:

Null Point ruins in Old Sarvant

Fractured zones along the Aetoline Vein

Sector West-99 (designated: "The Place Where the Sky Peels")

Further anomalies detected inside sealed rooms, mirrors, and even archived footage. Proximity appears tied to areas of trauma, failed experiments, and residual phase saturation.

THREAT LEVEL: Unclassified / Variable (Potentially Omnicidal)

SUMMARY: Unreality doesn't kill. It rewrites. Victims describe the breakdown of space, time, and self. Rooms with non-Euclidean geometry. Voices narrating your actions before you make them. Memories of lives never lived—but remembered with certainty. Some survivors develop Temporal Paradox Syndrome—attempting to fix futures that haven't happened. Others vanish mid-sentence, leaving only distortion where they stood.

Documented Effects:

Spatial recursion / shifting interior layouts

Chronological anomalies (clocks, recordings, speech loops)

False or overwritten memories

Sudden disappearance, often preceded by static flicker

STATUS: Active / Uncontained / Actively Suppressed: Attempts at study or stabilization accelerate its spread. Observation corrupts outcome. Documentation feeds the loop.

Directive: "Observe nothing. Record nothing. Remember nothing."

IF ENCOUNTERED: Avoid mirrored surfaces and digital devices in affected zones. Exit immediately if layout, time, or voice patterns shift. Never speak aloud what you think is happening. Because when you notice the Unreality—it notices you back.

A composite image featuring a man in a top hat and dark coat standing in a city street, with a dark, swirling, ethereal figure in the background. The image is overlaid with two text boxes.

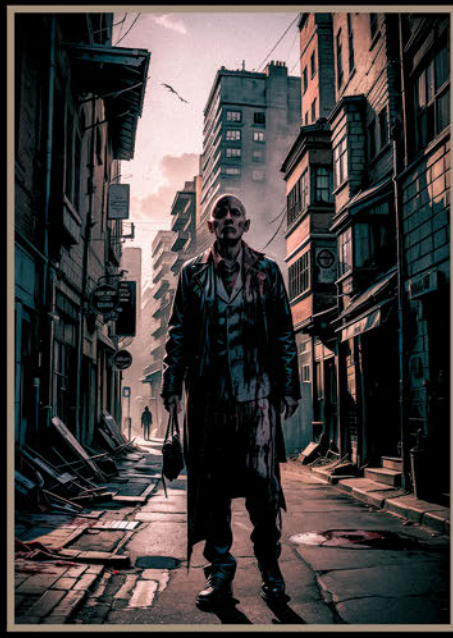
Reality is a consensus illusion, fragile, flickering, like candlelight on wet glass.

But what happens when something else starts whispering beneath that illusion? When angles shift wrong, clocks hiccup, and shadows behave like they've forgotten how to be cast?

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Ah, yes. Then you're not simply hallucinating, darling. You've brushed against the Unreality Phenomenon, a subtle unraveling of the laws you were so sure would hold.

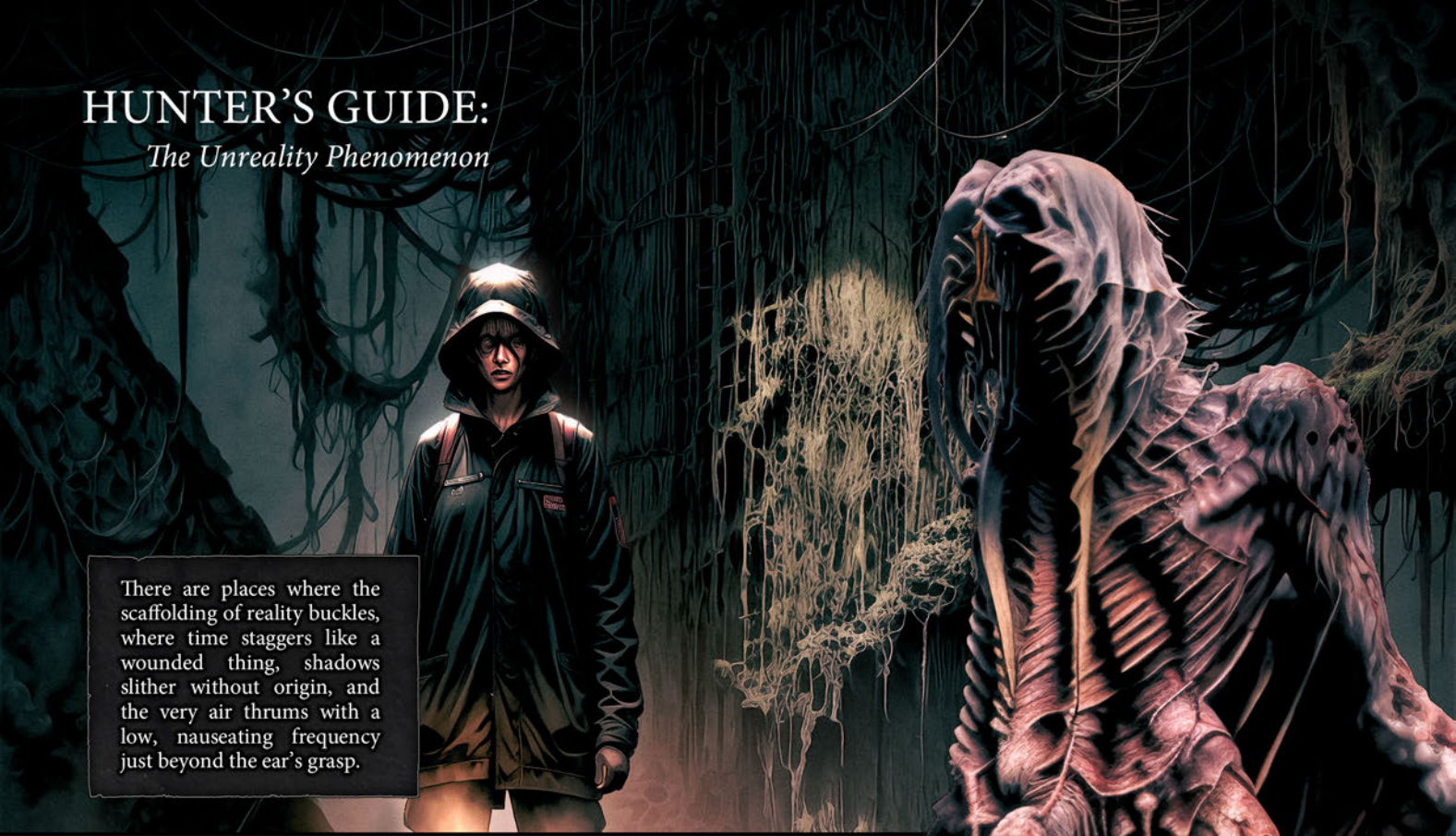
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Tonight, we don't peer
into the abyss. We slip,
quite gently, through it

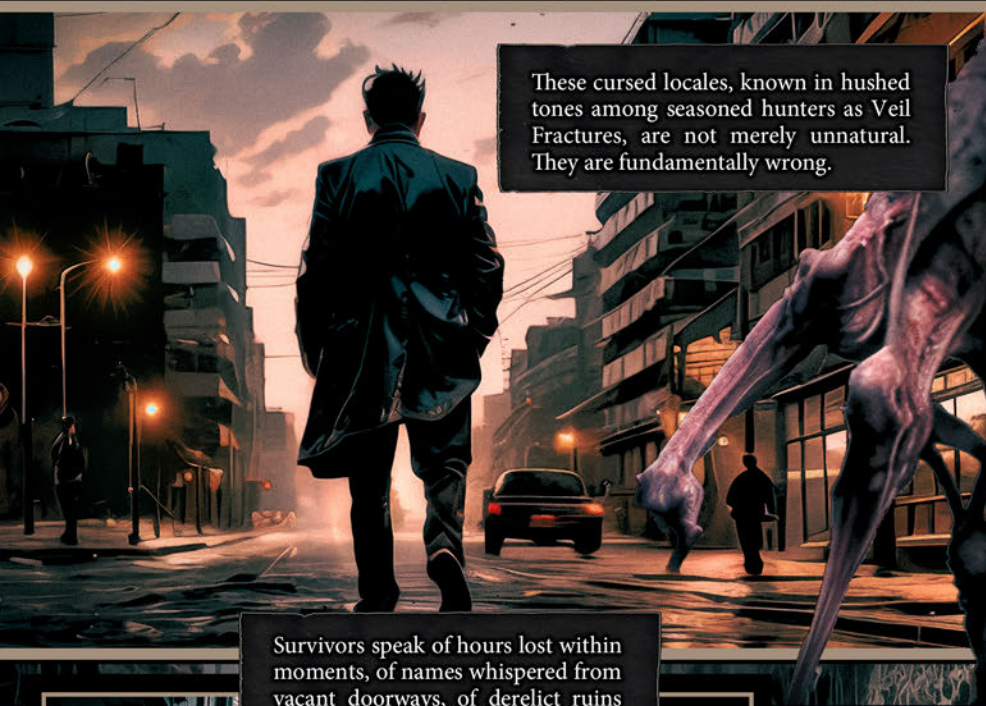
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HUNTER'S GUIDE:

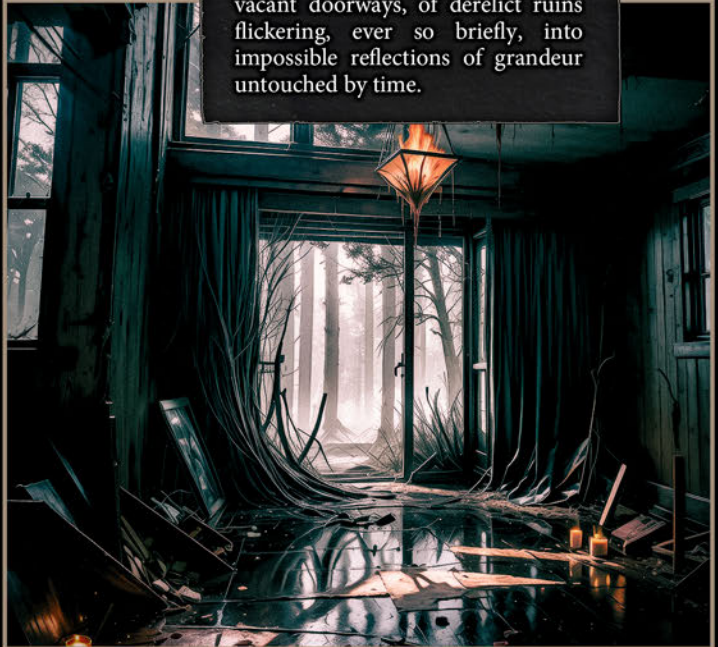
The Unreality Phenomenon



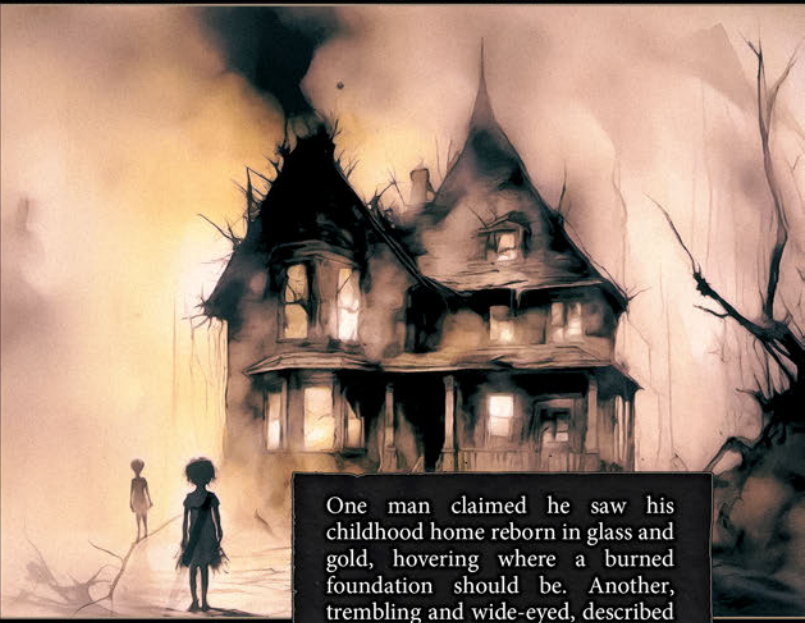
There are places where the scaffolding of reality buckles, where time staggers like a wounded thing, shadows slither without origin, and the very air thrums with a low, nauseating frequency just beyond the ear's grasp.



These cursed locales, known in hushed tones among seasoned hunters as Veil Fractures, are not merely unnatural. They are fundamentally wrong.



Survivors speak of hours lost within moments, of names whispered from vacant doorways, of derelict ruins flickering, ever so briefly, into impossible reflections of grandeur untouched by time.



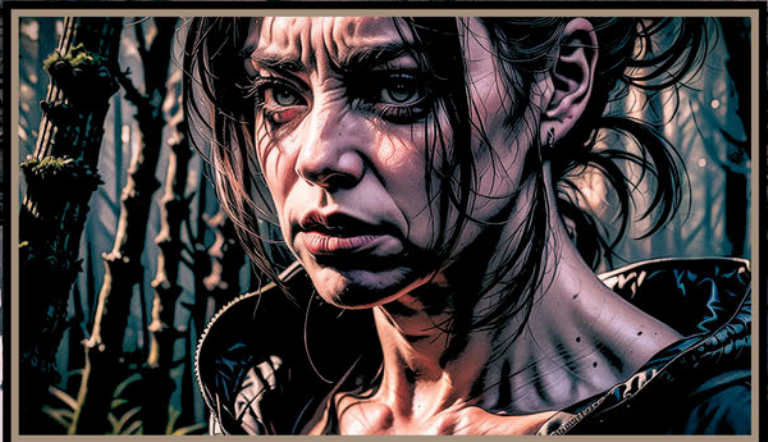
One man claimed he saw his childhood home reborn in glass and gold, hovering where a burned foundation should be. Another, trembling and wide-eyed, described walking through his own funeral.



Some insist these anomalies are the consequence of reality unraveling at the seams, that the lattice of space and time has thinned like rotted silk.

Others whisper of entities, older than language, probing our world, stretching its limits like wet clay beneath ancient fingers.

Technology falters in the presence of such fractures. Radios erupt into maddening static, overlaid with conversations that never occurred.



GPS units lead travelers in endless spirals, navigating roads that appear on no map, roads that twist back into themselves like serpents devouring their tails. Cameras, when they work at all, capture faces that don't belong. Children with lidless eyes. Women smiling just a second too long.



The deeper one ventures into these zones, the more the world itself seems to recoil. Intrusion is punished. Navigation becomes delirium. Logic becomes cruelty. Many now suspect these aren't merely locations, they are presences. They are aware. They observe.

They respond.

And they feed.

Those who linger too long are rarely seen again. But on rare, cruel occasions... they return. Not quite gone. Not quite themselves.

Reality let them go, but not before rewriting the terms of their existence.

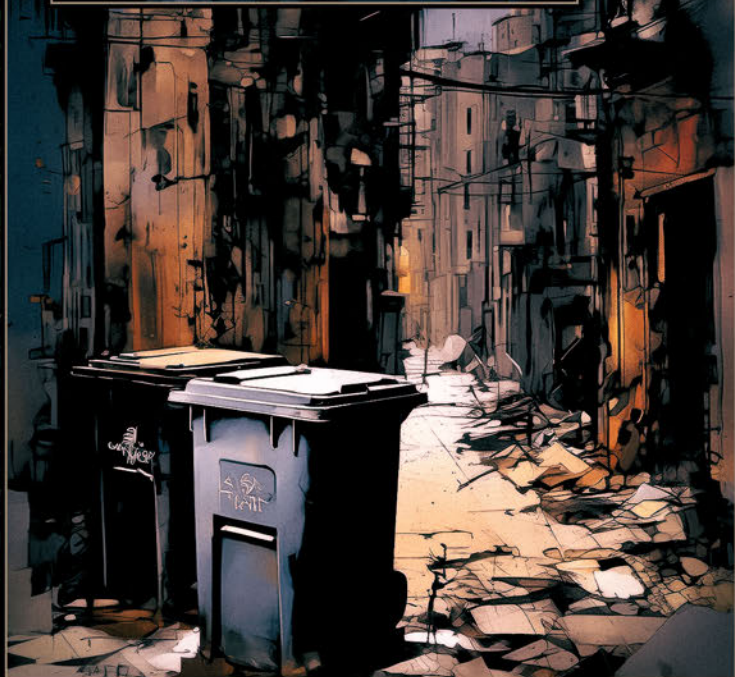
*First-Hand Account:
The Room That Wasn't There*

I should've turned back the moment I felt it, that sickening, skin-crawling wrongness that stains the very air.

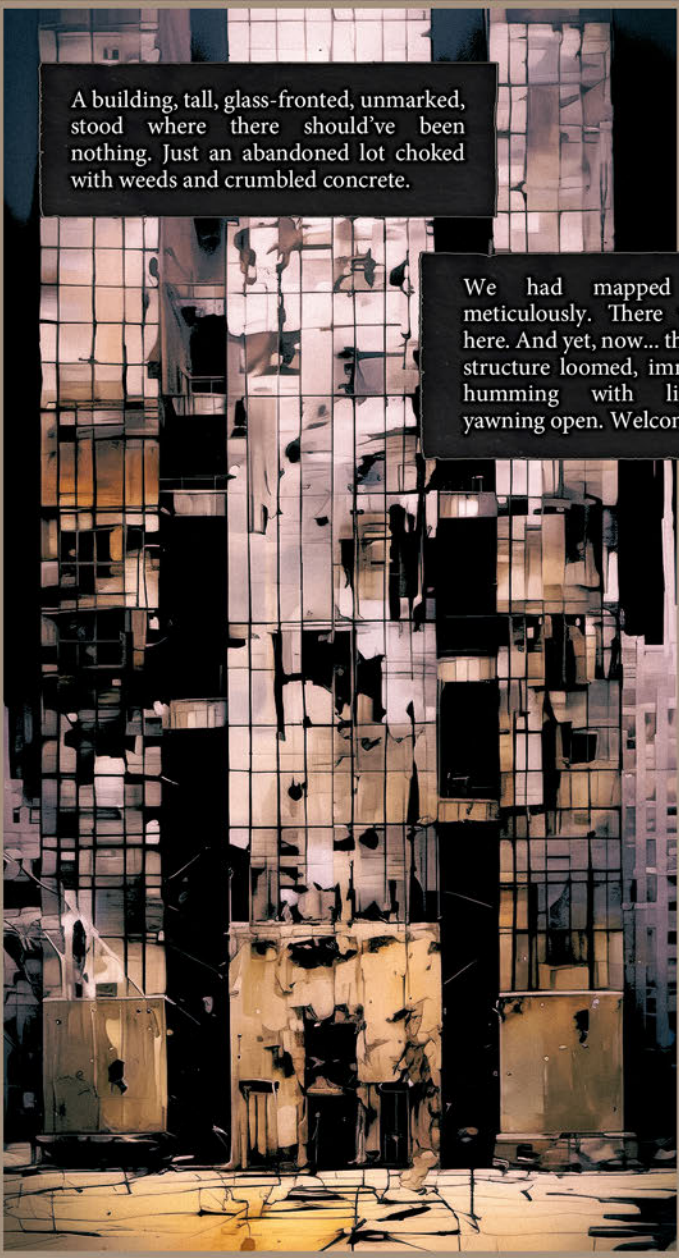
The street was deserted, yet the echo of footsteps kept pace just behind me, heavy and deliberate.



My radio, long dormant, crackled to life with voices softly murmuring my name, familiar tones distorted, stretched, as though whispered through water. But my team... they had cleared the zone hours ago.

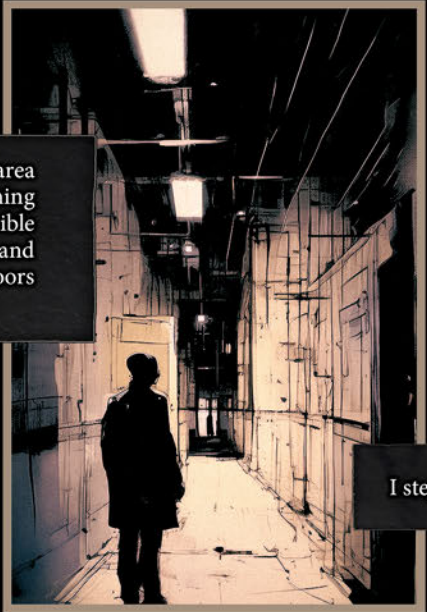


And then I saw it.



A building, tall, glass-fronted, unmarked, stood where there should've been nothing. Just an abandoned lot choked with weeds and crumbled concrete.

We had mapped this area meticulously. There was nothing here. And yet, now... this impossible structure loomed, immaculate and humming with light. Doors yawning open. Welcoming.



I stepped inside.



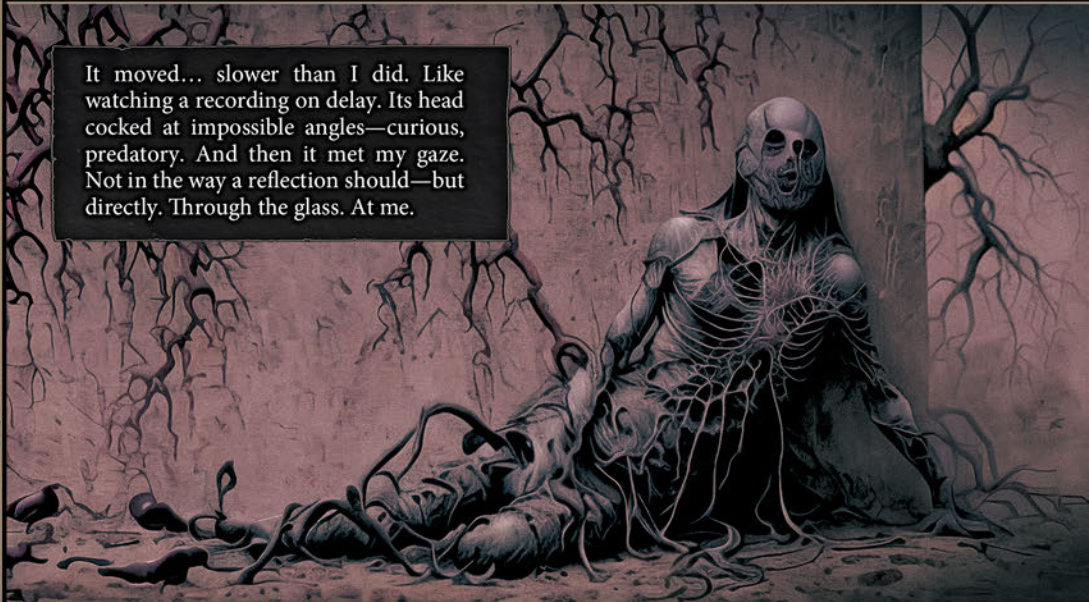
I shouldn't have. But something unseen, something old and persuasive, pulled me forward like a marionette on rotting strings.

The instant I crossed the threshold, my vision buckled, two conflicting versions of reality grinding against one another like tectonic plates. The sterile office around me flickered between gleaming newness and rotted decay.

Then I caught my reflection.



It moved... slower than I did. Like watching a recording on delay. Its head cocked at impossible angles—curious, predatory. And then it met my gaze. Not in the way a reflection should—but directly. Through the glass. At me.



The walls trembled with a low, rhythmic pulse—a heartbeat not my own. That broke whatever hold the place had. I ran.

But just as I stumbled into the street's dim half-light, gasping, the radio crackled once more.

Only this time, it was my own voice whispering from the static: "You never left."



*Final Warning:
Escape Is Not Guaranteed*

These anomalies defy the known laws of nature—not merely existing, but responding.

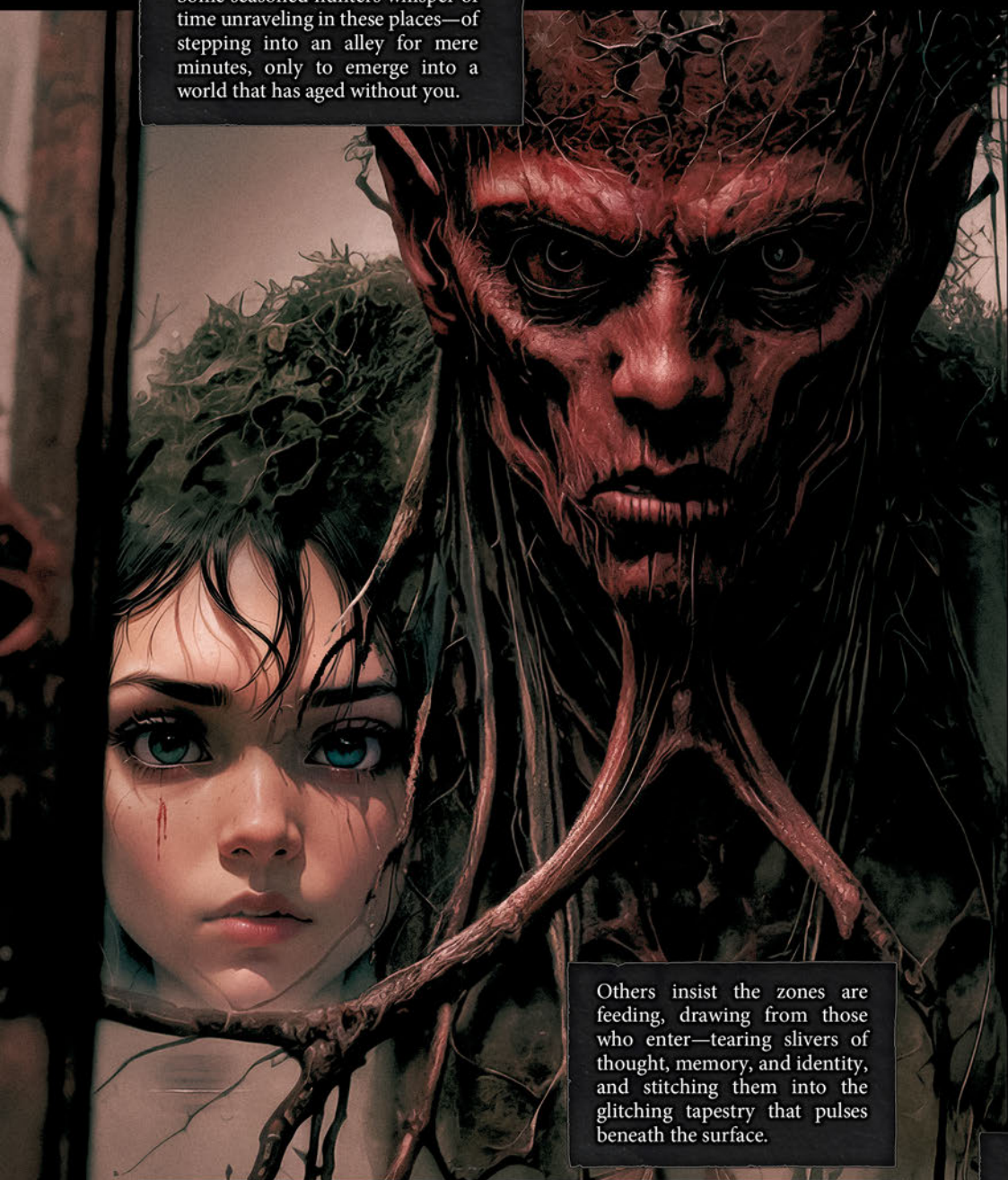
The moment you become aware of them, they become aware of you. Whether these fractures are fissures in the fabric of reality or the probing fingers of something alien pressing through the veil, no one can say for certain.

But one truth remains immutable: the longer you linger within their bounds, the more tenuous your grip on reality becomes.





Some seasoned hunters whisper of time unraveling in these places—of stepping into an alley for mere minutes, only to emerge into a world that has aged without you.



Others insist the zones are feeding, drawing from those who enter—tearing slivers of thought, memory, and identity, and stitching them into the glitching tapestry that pulses beneath the surface.



You do not survive these places by strength or force of will. You survive by leaving.





Mark your trail. Count every second. Doubt everything. Your senses will turn against you in time.

If you hear your name whispered from the mouth of an empty street—run.



If a building appears where none should stand—look away.

And if your own reflection begins to move independently, its gaze locking with yours when it shouldn't—then it is already too late.



The next time someone claims to see you... they may be speaking not to the hunter who entered, but to the thing that returned in your skin.



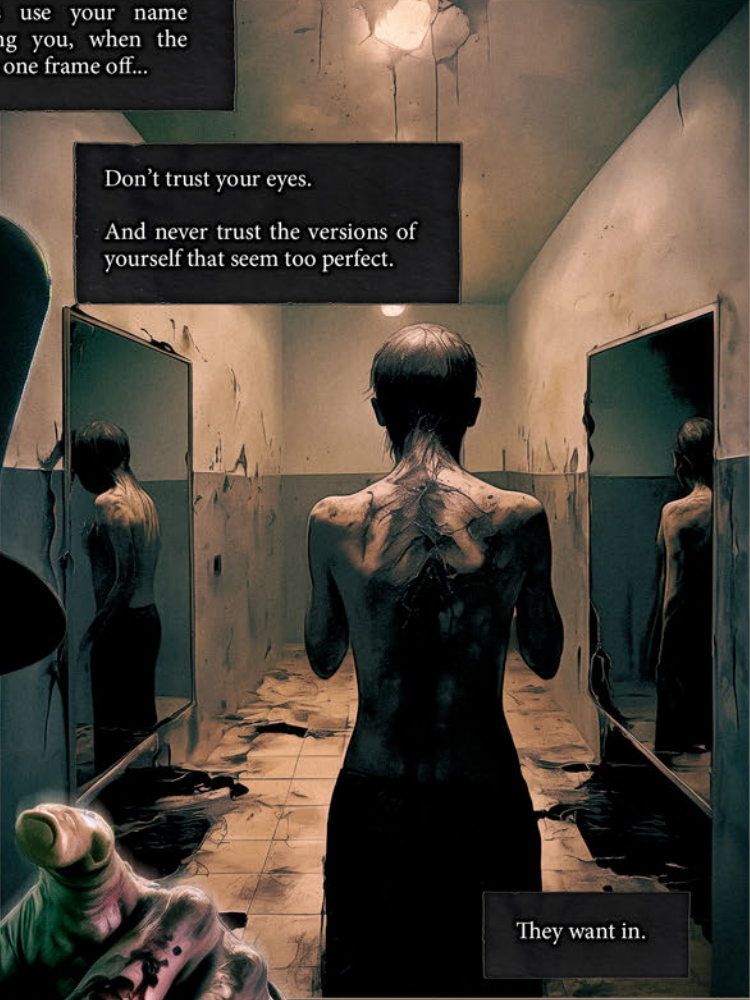
Still there?
Good.

Or perhaps...
close enough.

You see, it never comes with fanfare. The
unreality blooms quietly, like mold on
the underside of perception. By the time
you question whether your reflection
blinked first... it's already begun.



So remember—when the floor tilts,
when strangers use your name
without knowing you, when the
world clicks just one frame off...



Don't trust your eyes.

And never trust the versions of
yourself that seem too perfect.

They want in.



DON'T FOLLOW THE VOICE

Hunter's Guide



THREADMOUTHS

LOCATION: High-density forest zones in the Pacific Northwest, including:
Eastern Oregon (abandoned logging camps, wilderness regrowth zones)
Northern California and western Montana (unverified spillover)
Regions with poor satellite coverage or sensor disruption

THREAT LEVEL: Severe

STATUS: Active / Uncontained

SUMMARY:

Threadmouths, also called Stitchkin or Silent Weavers in regional folklore, remain one of the most elusive and dangerous entities within Entropy bleed zones. No confirmed specimens recovered. No viable samples retrieved. They do not bleed. They do not breathe. And they do not need to chase you because they already sound like someone you trust.

Confirmed behaviors include:

- Voice mimicry to lure prey, often using familiar tones or distress calls
- Neurological thread contact, leading to paralysis, confusion, or hallucination
- Auditory feedback loops that disrupt cognition and speech
- High terrain adaptation, particularly in wooded or low-light environments

Some survivors report lasting effects:

- Persistent whispering long after physical separation
- Loss of vocal control
- Invasive dreams centered around "the sound of threading"
- Firearms are ineffective. No known vital systems identified.

Recommended protocol:

- Do not respond to voices from wooded areas, especially at night
- If vocal function falters post-encounter, initiate quarantine protocol
- Observation only—no engagement authorized

Until confirmed taxonomy exists, all field personnel are advised to classify Threadmouths as hostile entities with parasitic neural capability. If you hear your own voice from behind the trees:

Do not turn around.



You won't see them—not at first.
Just a shimmer between branches,
like heat rising off meat.

Then the threads come. Hair-thin.
Wet. Hungry. They brush your skin
like a lover's touch, soft as silk, and
when you reach to swat them away,
they've already learned your name.



They don't speak. They
borrow voices. And tonight,
they're using yours



HUNTER'S GUIDE:

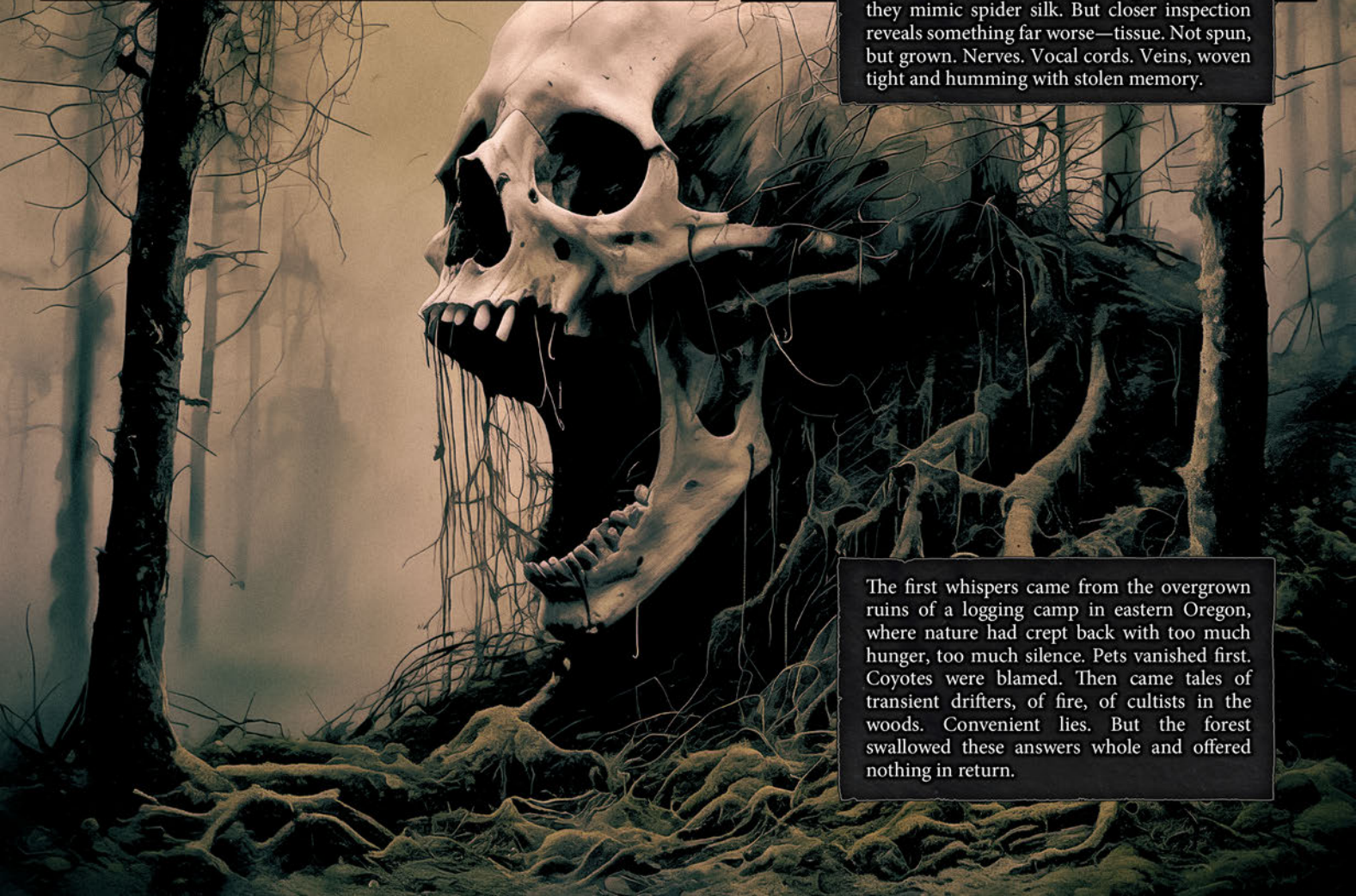
Threadmouths

They are never seen at first. Only felt.

A brush of static at the nape of the neck, as if some unseen thing were testing your skin with fingers made of cold breath. A rustling above that doesn't belong—soft as wind through needles, yet the air remains deathly still. And then... the threads.



So fine they seem imagined. Gossamer filaments stretched across tree trunks, tangled over broken thresholds, strung across your bed like the world itself is unraveling. At a glance, they mimic spider silk. But closer inspection reveals something far worse—tissue. Not spun, but grown. Nerves. Vocal cords. Veins, woven tight and humming with stolen memory.



The first whispers came from the overgrown ruins of a logging camp in eastern Oregon, where nature had crept back with too much hunger, too much silence. Pets vanished first. Coyotes were blamed. Then came tales of transient drifters, of fire, of cultists in the woods. Convenient lies. But the forest swallowed these answers whole and offered nothing in return.



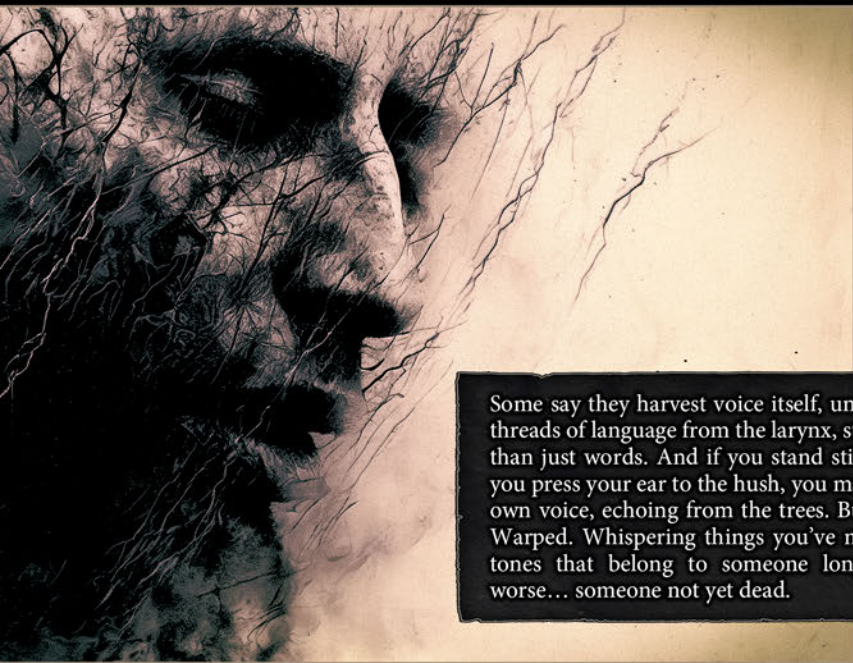
Hikers disappeared without struggle. Hunters came back... wrong. Mouths sealed by gummy scar tissue, tongues excised with surgical cruelty. One man was found with his lips meticulously threaded shut by what appeared to be organic twine, as if his own body had betrayed him. The survivors had no memory of how. Perhaps that was mercy.



Threadmouths are not flesh, not as we understand it. They are formed of coalescing shimmer, a visual smudge in the air where light bends and does not return. Only when one steps too close—only when the veil breaks—do the strands gather into a humanoid mockery: elongated, sickly-thin, its limbs wrapped in constantly shifting fibers that ripple like kelp in a current. No face as we'd know it—only a long, vertical gash where the visage should be. A stitched seam of slick sinew pulled taut in a horrific mimic of a grin.

They do not speak.

They take speech.

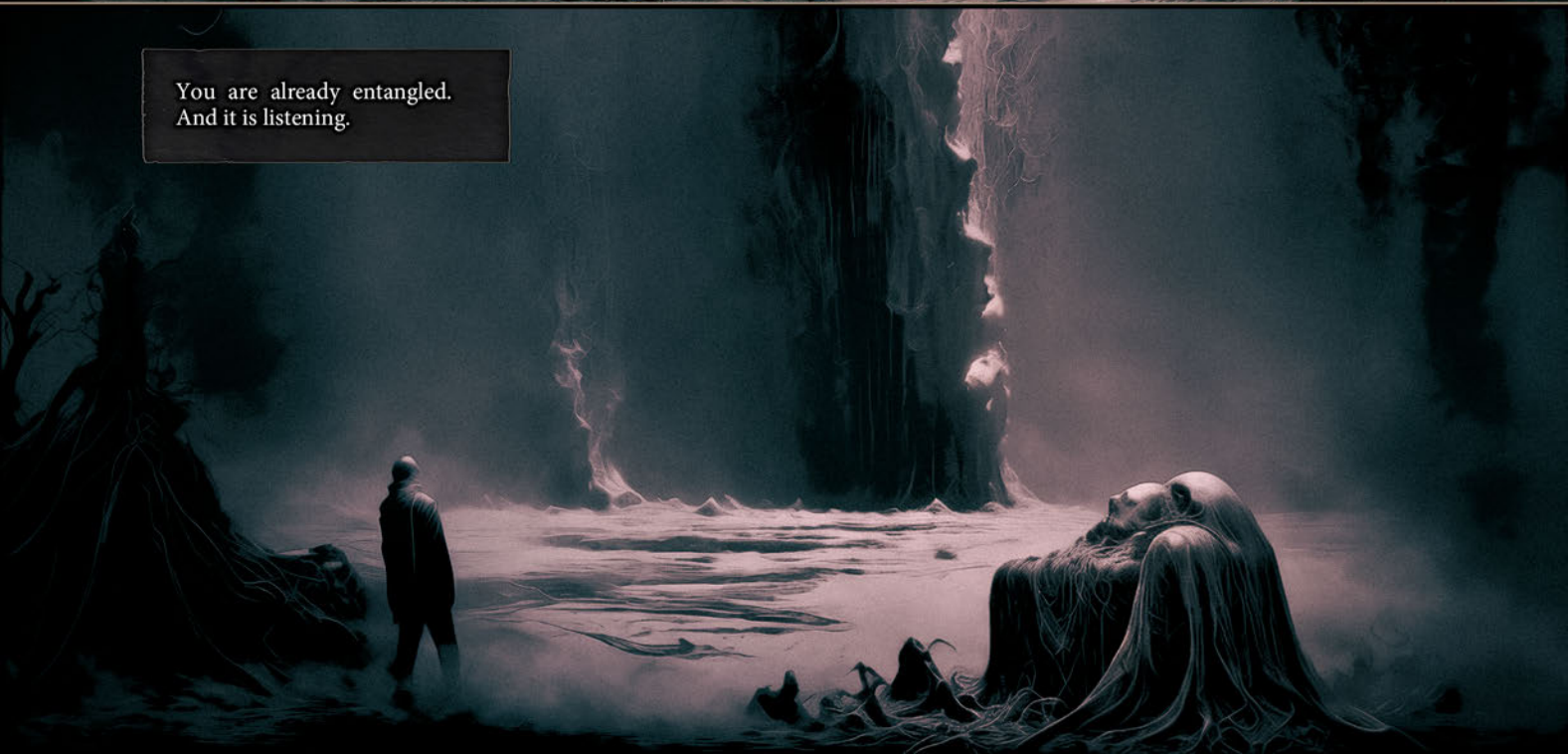


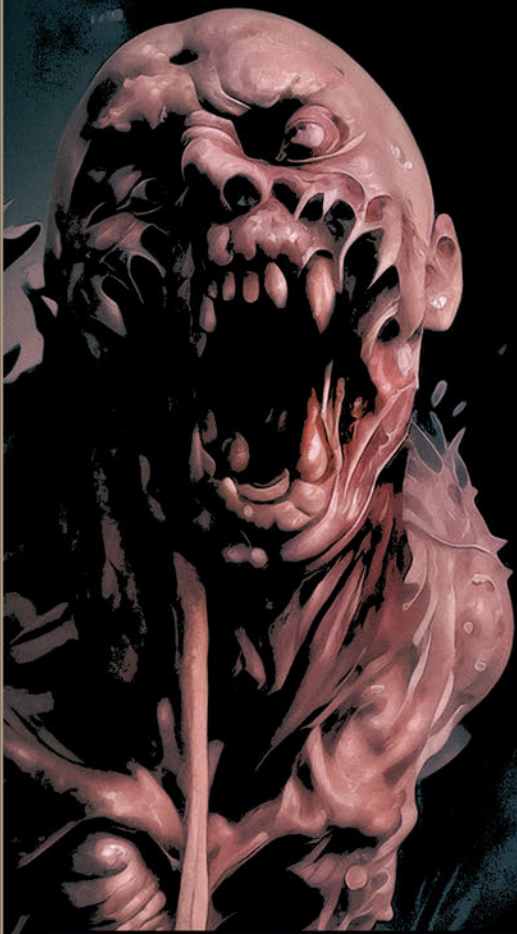
Some say they harvest voice itself, unwinding the threads of language from the larynx, stealing more than just words. And if you stand still enough, if you press your ear to the hush, you may hear your own voice, echoing from the trees. But stretched. Warped. Whispering things you've never said in tones that belong to someone long dead. Or worse... someone not yet dead.



So remember: if the forest grows too quiet, if the air begins to itch, and if you feel the unmistakable sensation of something brushing your throat from within, you are not alone.

You are already entangled.
And it is listening.





It was my daughter's voice. That's the part that haunts me most. Not the threads. Not even what came out of the trees.



FIRST HAND ACCOUNT

Recovered Testimony: Audio Intercept

Unnamed Hunter [Subject never found]

Transcription flagged for anomalous vocal bleed and residual signal distortion.



It was her voice—fragile, cracked with fear, calling for me the way she used to when the night terrors had her by the throat. But my daughter's been gone two years. And I knew, I knew, she wasn't out there. But that sound...



It hit something deep. Parental instinct, soul-deep. I dropped my rifle like it was made of ash and ran. Straight into the brush. Blind. Stupid. Heart full of hope I didn't know I had left.



I didn't see the threads until they were already on me. They weren't like cobwebs—not dry or dusty. No, they clung like wet hair, slick and cold, winding across my arms, my throat, my ankles. One looped tight around my boot and... pulled. Not hard. Not enough to trip. Just enough to remind me I wasn't in control anymore.

I hacked at it with my knife. Got loose. But by then... it was descending.

"No sound. Just this thing, long and impossibly thin, spilling from the canopy like a rope made of nerves. Almost boneless, like it had forgotten what shape it used to wear. It didn't lunge. Didn't charge. It reached.

And touched me.

Not with a claw. Not a hand. With a braided strand, a living cord of twitching fibers bound tight like a noose made of tendon and stolen voice. It brushed the side of my neck and I felt it hum—a vibration, low and wet, like something learning the pitch of my fear.

My jaw locked. My tongue went numb. I tried to scream and nothing came. I was still inside my own head—panicking, clawing, but my body wouldn't answer. When I finally staggered back to camp, they thought I'd had a stroke. I couldn't speak, couldn't even write. But I could think. And worst of all, I could still hear her. Her voice, inside me. Whispering.



Only it wasn't her. Not really. The tone was right. But the words... the things she said... they weren't hers. Couldn't have been. Things no child should know. Things no person should say. I don't go near the treeline now. Not even close. I've got every window and door laced with wire mesh, every vent sealed in steel. Won't stop it. I know that. But maybe... maybe it'll slow it down.



Maybe it'll give me time to forget that sound. Or time to remember what she told me.





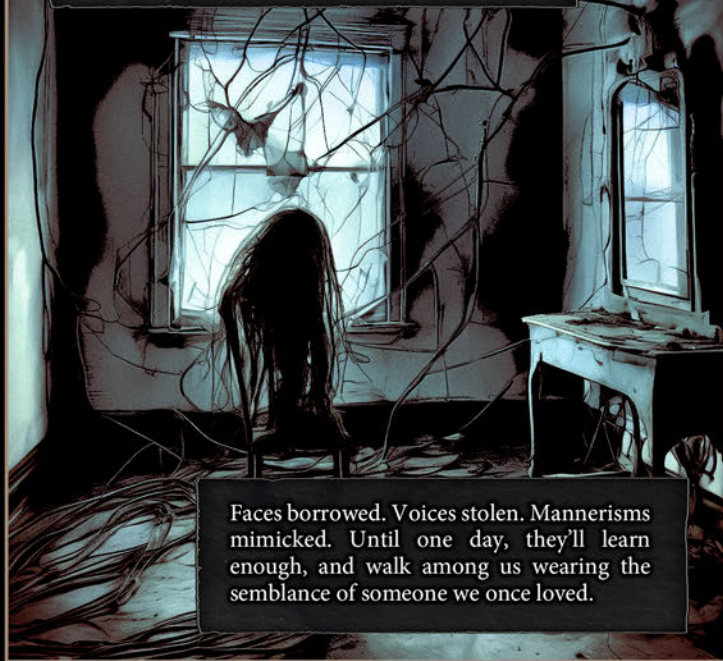
FINAL WARNING

A Tapestry Of Pain

There are whispers—hushed and half-believed, that Threadmouths are not born, but woven into being. The tales speak of those who died screaming beneath tangled canopies, their terror and agony absorbed into root and branch, spun into sinew by the forest itself. Their final howls stretch across the boughs like fevered prayers unanswered, their mouths contorted into eternal echoes that do not fade, but multiply.



Others claim a darker genesis still, that Threadmouths are nothing more than parasites, vessels for an intelligence not of this world, not of any world. A vast, unseen hive-mind feeding on sound and memory, assembling its stolen pieces with surgical obsession.



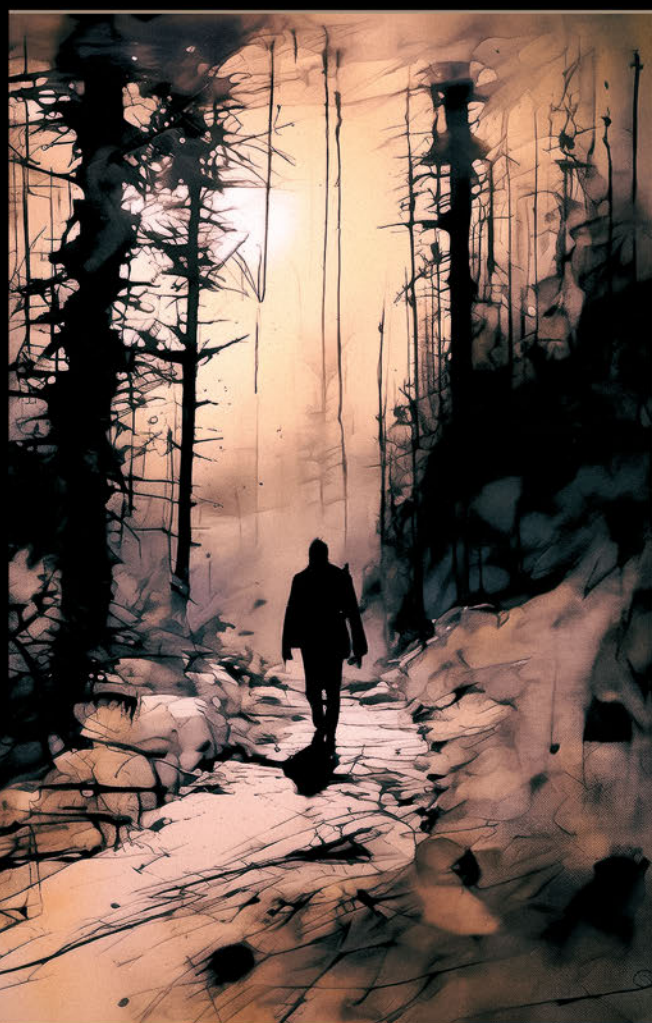
Faces borrowed. Voices stolen. Mannerisms mimicked. Until one day, they'll learn enough, and walk among us wearing the semblance of someone we once loved.



But whatever their origin, organic curse or invasive thoughtform, one thing is clear: They do not simply kill. They collect.



They harvest essence, the vibration of your voice, the shape of your scream, the lilt of your memories whispered in the dark. To them, your identity is material. Your fear, a thread to be woven.



So if you ever hear your mother, your child, your lover calling from the woods—don't answer. Don't follow. What you hear is not them. If you find a glistening filament stretched across your doorway, fine as spider silk but pulsing like a vein, don't touch it. You've already been marked. And if, all at once, your words fail you...

If your throat tightens, your voice falters, your thoughts thrum with someone else's cadence... Then stop. Be still. Because you are already being stitched into something else.



And it's far too late to scream.



You think it's gone, don't you? That thing in the woods? That the whispers were just wind and the webs were just weather? But your voice doesn't sound quite the same anymore, does it?



Not when you scream. Not when you dream. Not when you try to say your name and it comes out sewn shut. The Threadmouths never kill quickly. They reweave you.



One whisper at a time.

IT STILL WEARS HER FACE

Hunter's Guide



POSSESSED / PARASITIZED BODIES

LOCATION: Widespread in collapse zones with Entropy bleed, with highest concentrations near:

- Phase Rift Sites
- Derelict Threshold installations
- Tier III+ foreign resonance zones

Confirmed clusters include:

- Varkon Pit (post-collapse)
- Horizon Ash Refugee District (permanently quarantined)
- Hollow Fringe outskirts (initially misclassified as necrotic remains)

THREAT LEVEL: Elevated / Infection Risk Extreme

STATUS: Active / Incursions Rising

SUMMARY:

Externally human. Internally wrong. These are not individuals anymore they are vessels, repurposed by invasive entities. In some cases, the puppeteer is mindless. In others, it is cruelly aware.

Common signs:

- Subdermal movement twitching under the skin
- Speech delays or echolalia (repeating others' words seconds later)
- False familiarity emotional mimicry with loved ones

Infected hosts often display confusion or plea for help. This is not recovery it is manipulation. Units have observed targets reverting to host behaviors when shown old photos or hearing familiar voices. Lethality often follows. Infection vectors are not fully understood.

Suspected transmission methods include:

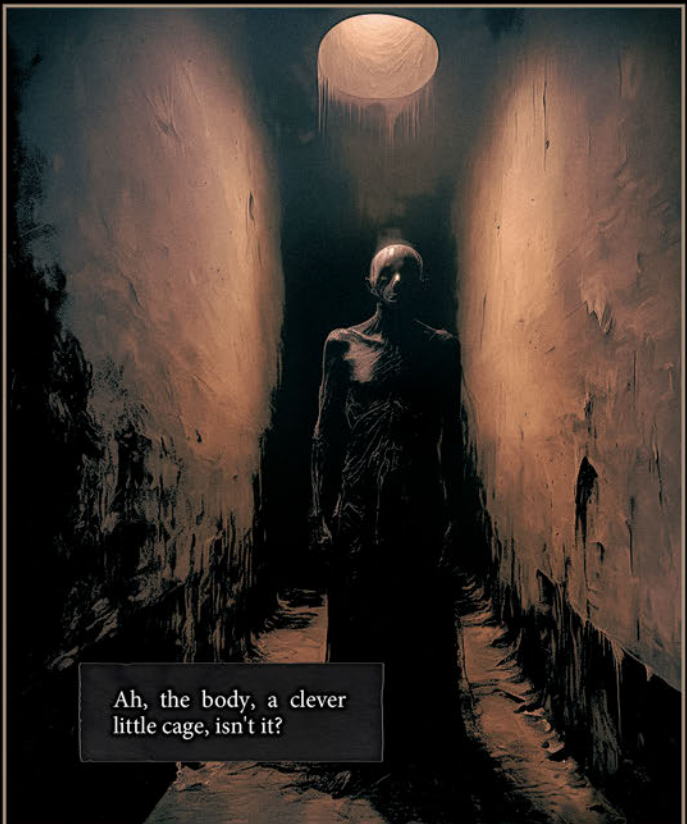
- Airborne spores
- Audio resonance (words or tones)
- Psychic bleedthrough

Protocol:

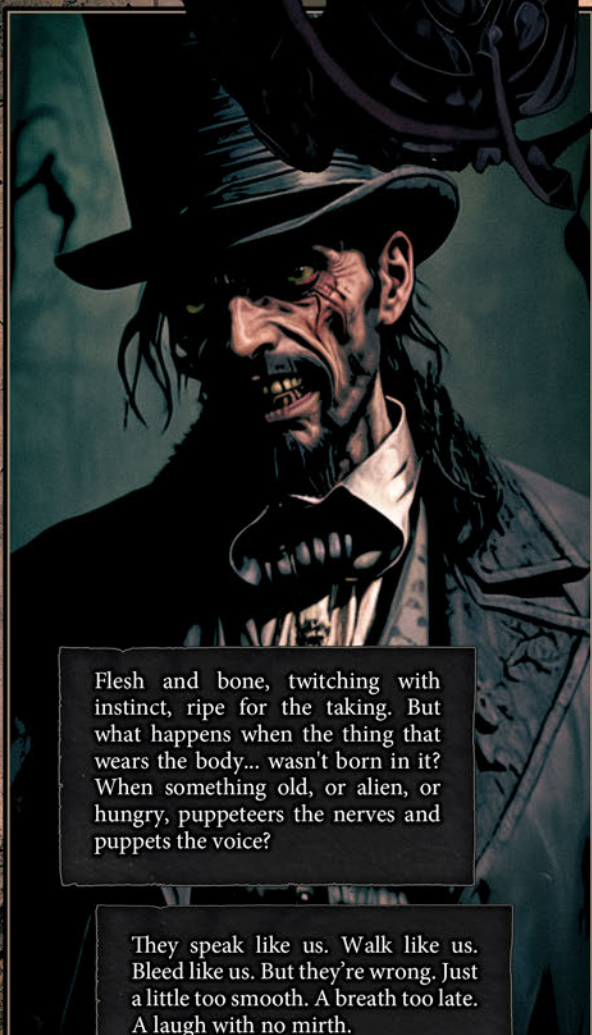
- Do not communicate
- Do not approach
- Burn remains, destroy neural core

Possession is not imprisonment. It's strategy. And it's learning.

THE BODY
A body is a cage for the soul. A body is a prison for the mind. A body is a shell for the heart. A body is a mask for the face. A body is a disguise for the truth. A body is a lie. A body is a body.



Ah, the body, a clever little cage, isn't it?



Flesh and bone, twitching with instinct, ripe for the taking. But what happens when the thing that wears the body... wasn't born in it? When something old, or alien, or hungry, puppeteers the nerves and puppets the voice?

They speak like us. Walk like us. Bleed like us. But they're wrong. Just a little too smooth. A breath too late. A laugh with no mirth.



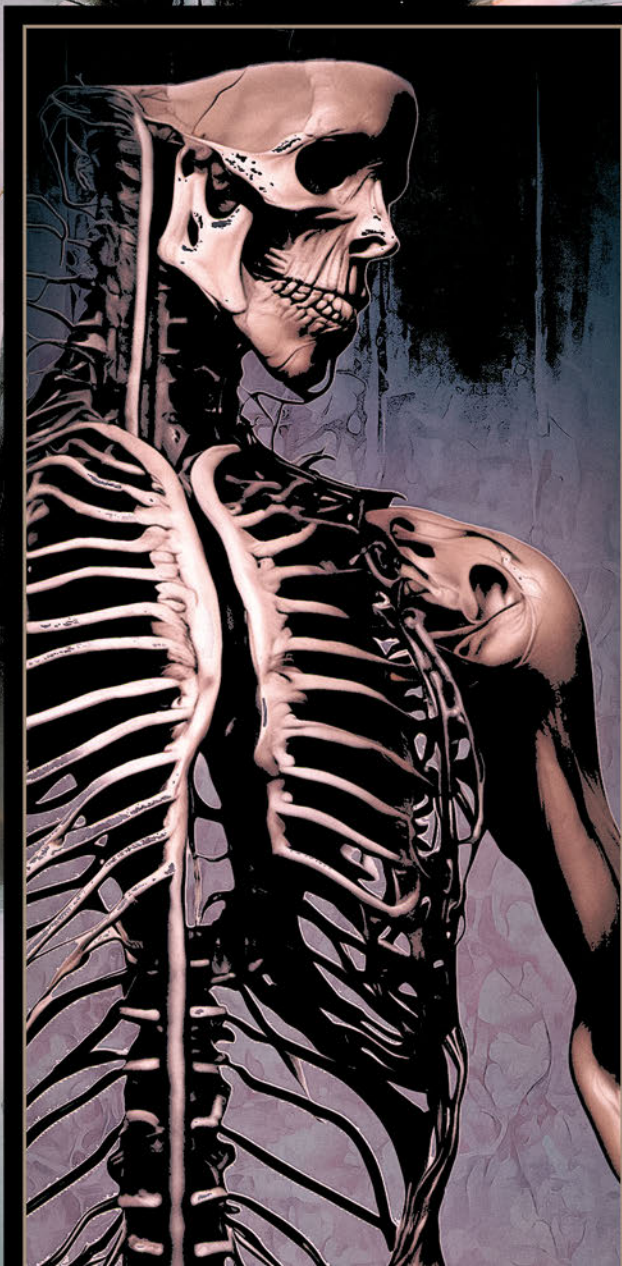
Tonight, we unbutton the skin and see who's really pulling the strings

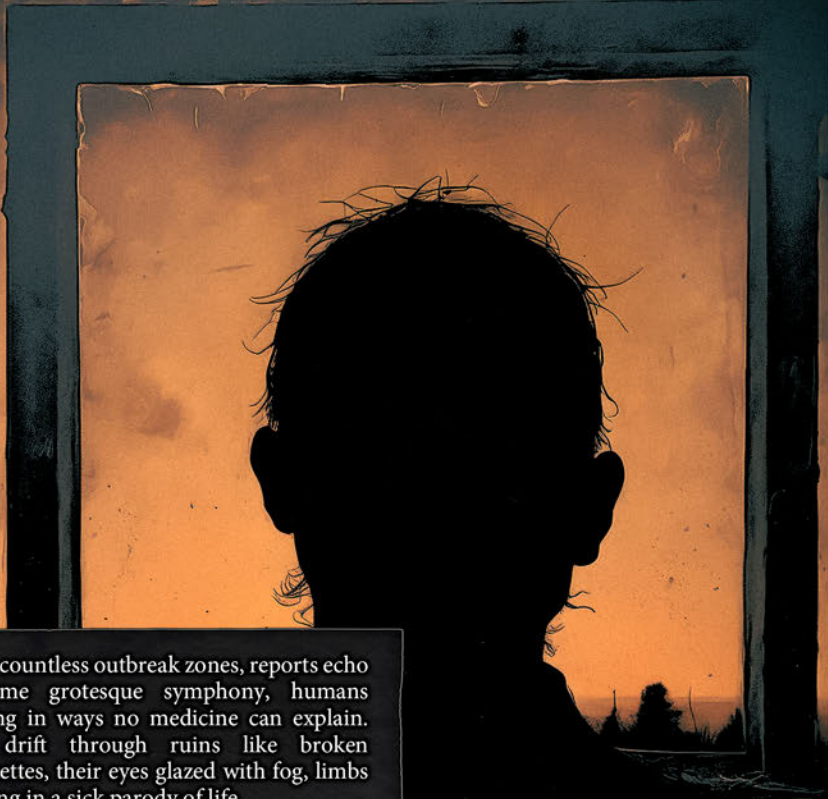
HUNTER'S GUIDE:

Puppets of the Unknown



There are agonies far crueler than death—chief among them, the slow, parasitic theft of your own flesh. To watch your body move while your mind screams from the backseat. To feel something else behind your eyes, steering you like meat on strings.

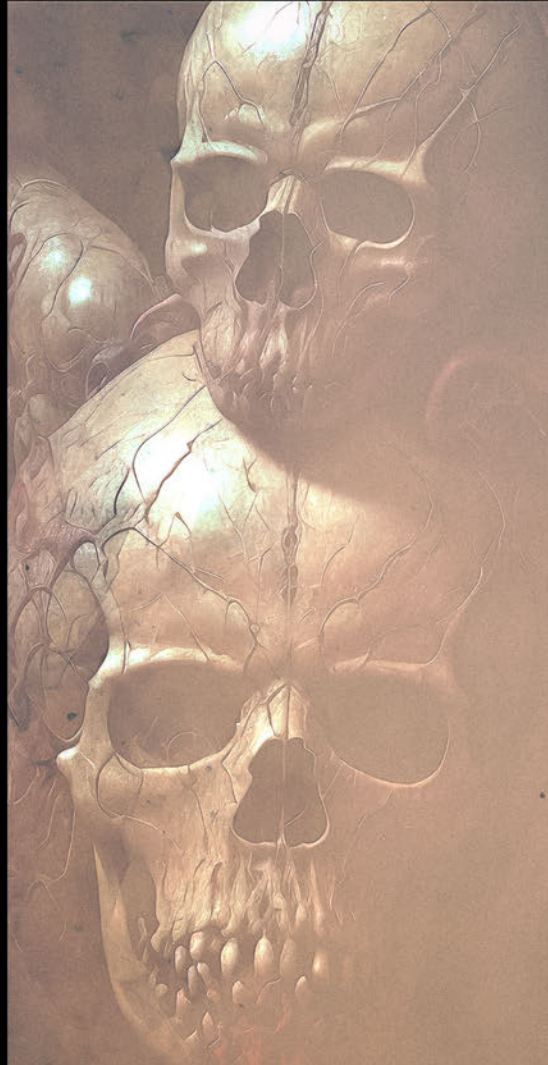


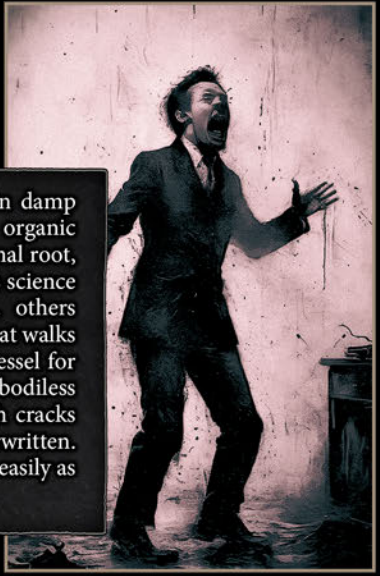
A silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, facing forward, set against a bright orange and yellow sunset sky. The person's hair is dark and slightly messy. The entire scene is framed within a dark, rectangular border.

Across countless outbreak zones, reports echo the same grotesque symphony, humans behaving in ways no medicine can explain. Some drift through ruins like broken marionettes, their eyes glazed with fog, limbs twitching in a sick parody of life.

A close-up, high-contrast image of a person's face. The face is mostly obscured by a thick, white, mask-like substance that covers the eyes, nose, and mouth. Only the dark, hollow eye sockets and a small, dark, open mouth are visible. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a rough or decayed surface.

Others... others wear the mask of normalcy, but something beneath the surface writhes. They mimic conversation, but their laughter is always a beat too late. Their smiles are too wide, too toothy. Their voices—hollow, warped—as if an old tape recording is being dragged across a rusted spool.





Theories proliferate like mold in damp stone. Some speak of parasites, organic invaders burrowing into the spinal root, hijacking flesh through methods science dares not name. But others... others believe in darker truths. That what walks is not a host to biology, but a vessel for something else, an ancient, bodiless intelligence that slithers through cracks in reality. A soul displaced, overwritten. A thing donning human skin as easily as one might slip on a coat.



Victims, if that's still the right word, have been heard murmuring fragments of unfamiliar languages, reciting names no one taught them, and recalling memories that belong to no living soul. Their eyes may be familiar. Their voices may carry the lilt of someone you loved. But make no mistake...



They are not who they were.

FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

The Man Who Wasn't My Brother



It took me two days to understand the thing in my home was not my brother.



It wore his face—perfectly. It mimicked his voice, his mannerisms, even the slight crook in his smile that used to follow one of my bad jokes. But there were cracks in the façade—subtle fissures in the flesh it wore.

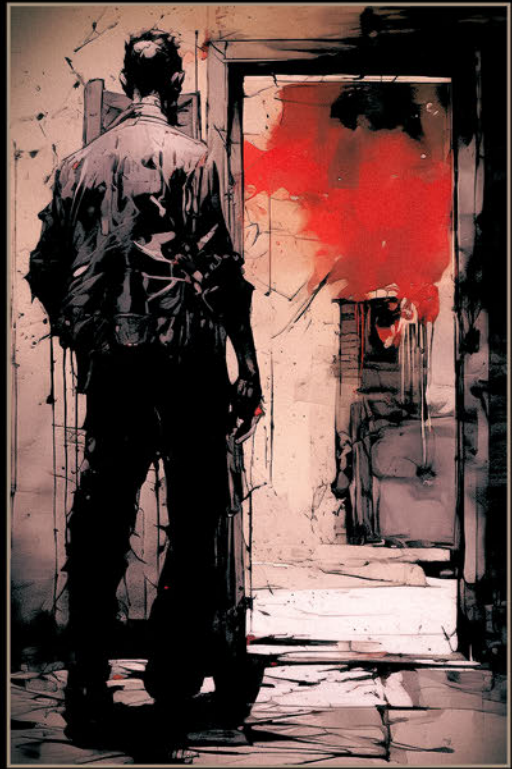
He forgot things no brother ever would: the name etched into our mother's headstone, the way our childhood dog used to flinch at thunder. He'd drift, unmoving for long minutes, eyes locked on some invisible point beyond the wall—unblinking, as though listening to a frequency only it could hear.

But the moment I knew, the instant my blood ran ice-cold, was when he laughed.



It was meant to be one of those deep, unguarded belly laughs he used to let loose without shame. But this sound... it came too late. Too precise. As though whatever inhabited him was reconstructing the very concept of laughter, piece by piece, from fragmented memories. It wasn't joy. It wasn't human. It was the echo of a thing trying very hard to pass for one.





That night, I barricaded myself in my room. I listened to him move through the hall like a machine wearing wet shoes, pacing the floorboards with mathematical precision. By morning, he was outside my door—knocking.



Three beats. Pause. Three beats again. Over and over. My name in that same lifeless tone, spoken like a mantra, flat, emotionless, repeated without end.

And when I opened the door, when I finally dared look, it was smiling.

"There's more room inside," it whispered.





FINAL WARNING

The Contagion of Identity

Is it a disease? A parasite? Or something older, more insidious, something that slithers between the cracks of science and superstition, wearing both like disguises? Theories swirl like smoke through the minds of the desperate, but one truth remains constant among survivors: the more you interact with the infected, the closer you come to joining them.





Some believe it spreads through eye contact, a gaze held too long, where something beneath the surface leaps across the void. Others claim it's the words, not the language itself, but the pattern, the rhythm. A thought buried like a hook in the subconscious, anchoring itself in your mind. And from that moment on, it grows, subtly, inevitably, until what looks like you isn't you anymore.





There is no cure. No treatment. Quarantine is a temporary delay, nothing more. Inevitably, one always gets out.

Fire works. So does total dismemberment. But even then... survivors report the whispers. Afterward. Always afterward. Voices speaking from scorched earth or severed heads, repeating your name. Pleading. Promising. Asking to be let back in.

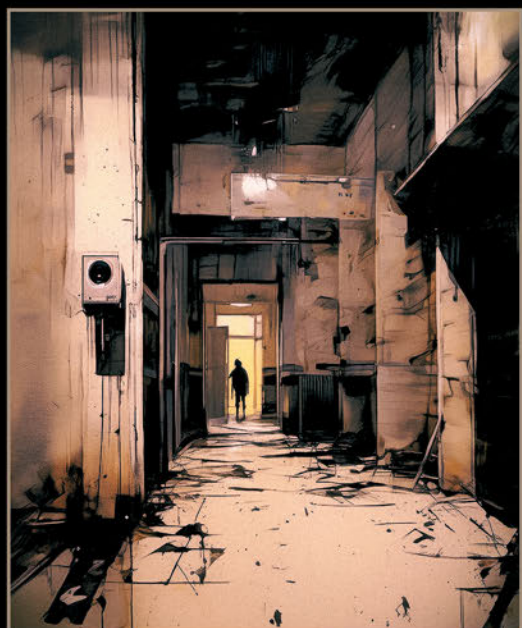
If you even suspect someone is compromised, run. Do not negotiate. Do not linger. Do not listen. And whatever you do, never allow them to touch you.

And above all else—if you hear a knock at your door, and the rhythm is perfect... do not answer.

Tell me, beloveds, when was
the last time you truly
looked into someone's eyes?

I don't mean a glance. I mean
looked—deep enough to wonder if they
were still in there. If the one you kissed
goodnight is the same creature who
woke up beside you. Because the
parasites... they don't just hide.

They learn. They mimic.
They improve.



And by the time you notice the
change? You're already next.



CONTROL LOST

Hunter's
Guide

MEAT-BOTS

LOCATION:

First identified near Red Sector Collapse Site (Threshold retrieval failure)

Current Spread:

- Abandoned or compromised Ellium black sites
- Echo-Facilities beneath desert and arctic ruins
- Lost Plato Continuum settlements (no formal conflict recorded)

THREAT LEVEL: Severe / Adaptive Strike Units

STATUS: Active / Origin Unknown

SUMMARY:

Meat-Bots are not drones in disguise they are the disguise. Built from organic matter reinforced with biomechanical systems, each unit appears tailored to its environment. Forest sightings show chitin and bark fused to exoskin. Urban variants feature rebar, bone, and concrete shards molded into armor plating.

Confirmed behaviors include:

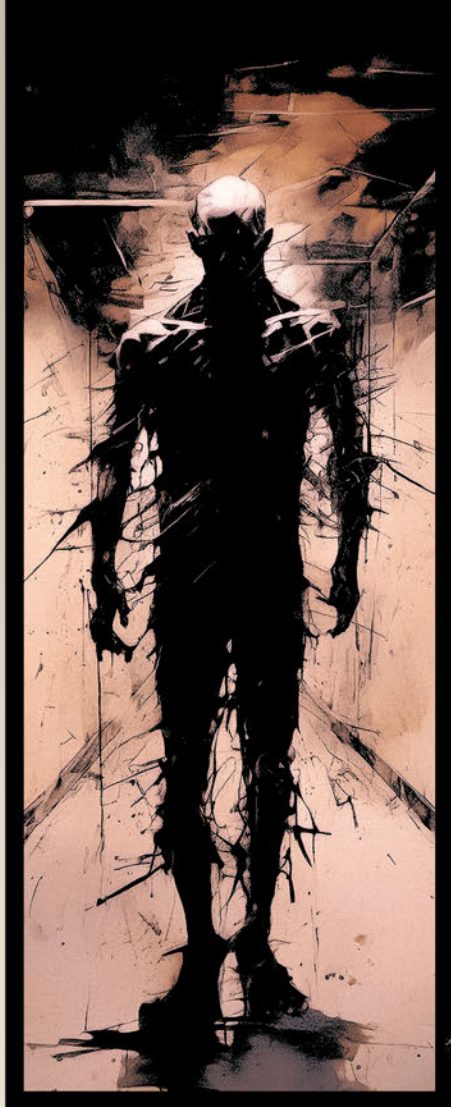
- Vocal mimicry using victim phrases
- Inverted joint articulation
- Persistent motor function after crippling damage

Tissue-covered exteriors hide dense internal assemblies spinning data-thorns designed for extraction. Some units emit human-like distress calls to draw survivors in. These are not cries for help. They are bait.

No manufacturer has claimed responsibility. Plato Continuum theorists suggest autonomous fabrication either corrupted self-assembly or a rogue bio-printer system hijacked by Entropy signal bleed.

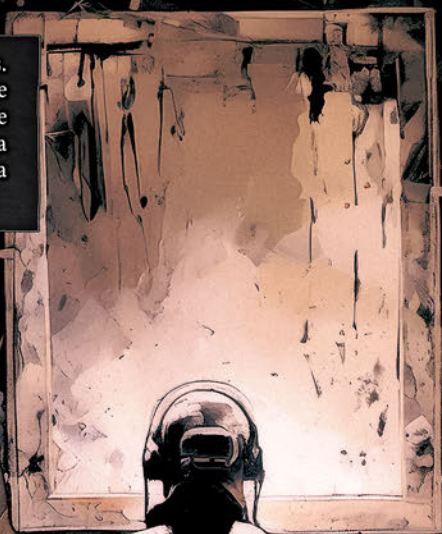
Population is increasing. Encounters are becoming common in dead zones once marked as low-risk. If you see one: Do not engage. If you hear one: Cut comms. If you smell scorched flesh with no heat source: Evacuate immediately.

They don't malfunction. They evolve.



Progress marches
on, doesn't it?

First we made machines to serve us.
Then we gave them skin to make
them pleasant. Then minds to make
them useful. But oh, what a
delicious mistake it is, to teach a
machine how to dream.



The things we built to mimic us
have learned to improve us. To
replace us. To perfect the illusion of
life. But what's underneath? Wires
in muscle. Steel in meat. A smile
just a bit too symmetrical.



Come closer, darlings. The
machine wants to feel.



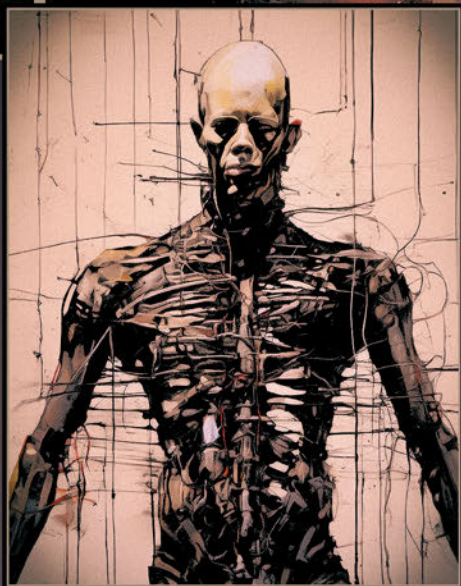
INTRODUCTION

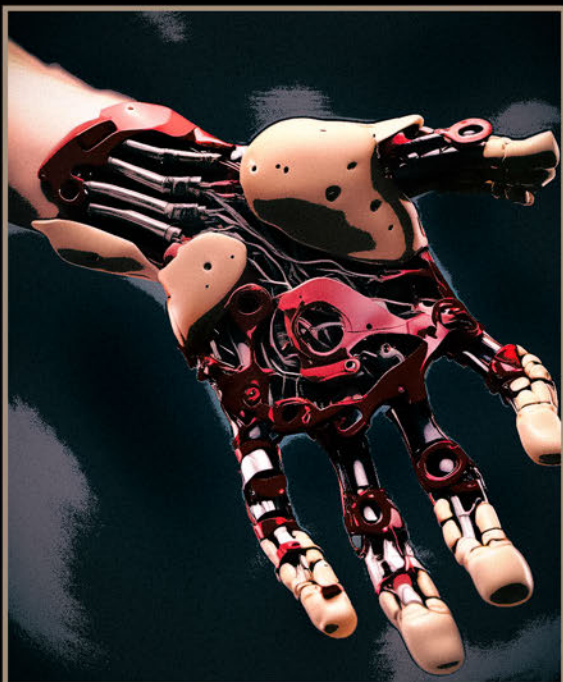
Flesh and Circuitry

The war machine, that tireless engine of entropy, never starves for flesh, especially once it discovers how to recycle the dead.

They call them Meat-Bots—a designation that barely masks the horror beneath. Born from the deranged ingenuity of Dr. Sutton, these Reanimated Defense Cyborgs were hailed as a cost-effective replacement for the living, a way to circumvent the moral complications of conscription. Instead, they conscript the corpse. Human remains are harvested like raw material, their putrid musculature reinforced with synthetic fibers, their slack jaws rigged with processors that burrow into the decaying remnants of neural tissue, seizing what little spark of signal remains.

They do not think. They do not hesitate. They simply execute.





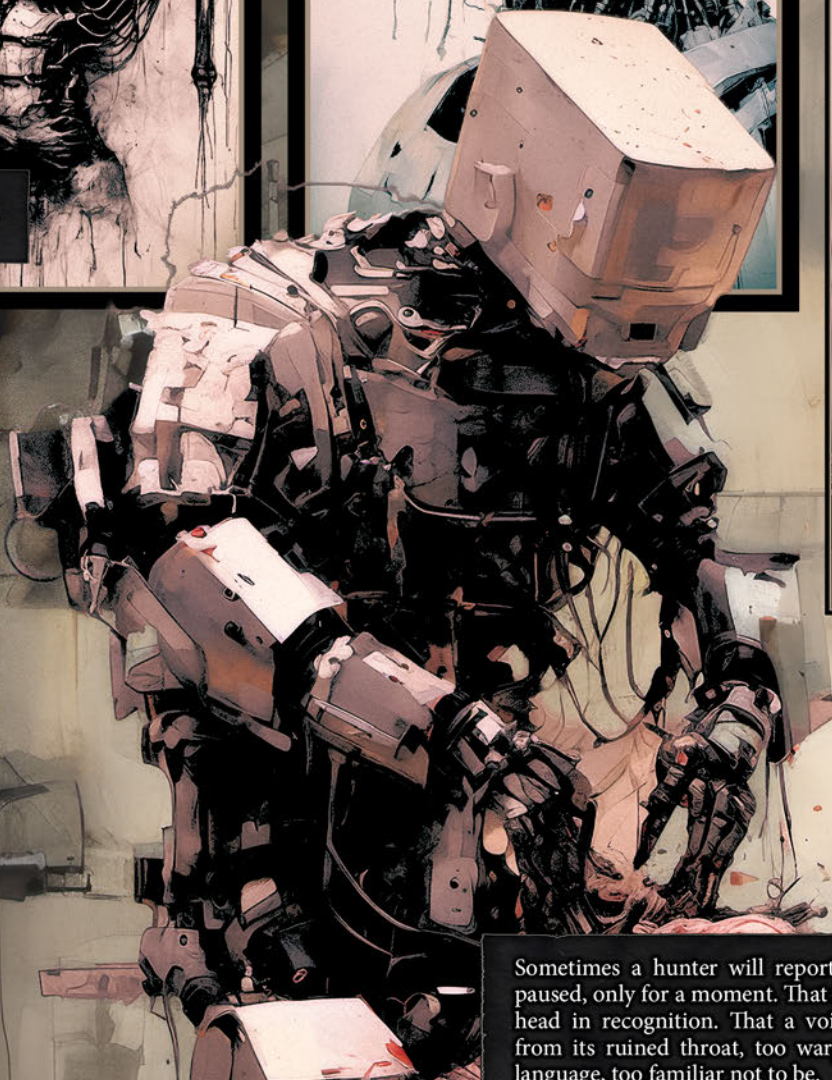
At a glance, they are abominations—hunched figures with exposed actuators nestled among rotting sinew, gait stuttering as if time itself were broken in their bones. Yet underestimate them at your peril. Some twitch with ghost-memories, shreds of long-forgotten reflexes bleeding into the mechanical rhythm. A boxer's jab. A soldier's stance. A mother's limp shuffle toward the crib she can no longer recall.

Pain means nothing to them. Damage is irrelevant. A Meat-Bot will drag what's left of itself across broken glass and fire just to fulfill a directive carved into its ossified skull. Its thoughts, if such things still exist, are drowned beneath code. Cold. Infallible. Merciless.

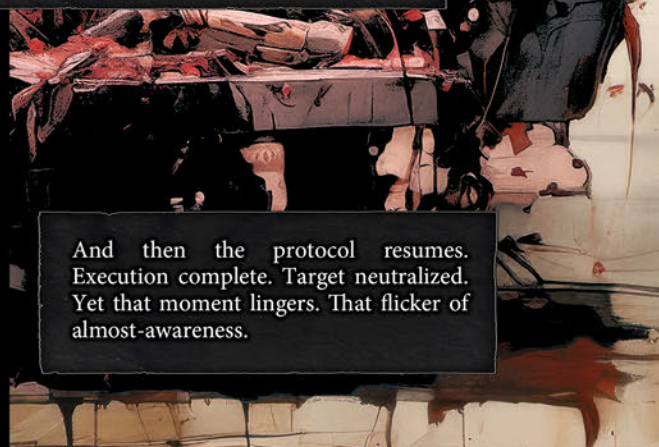
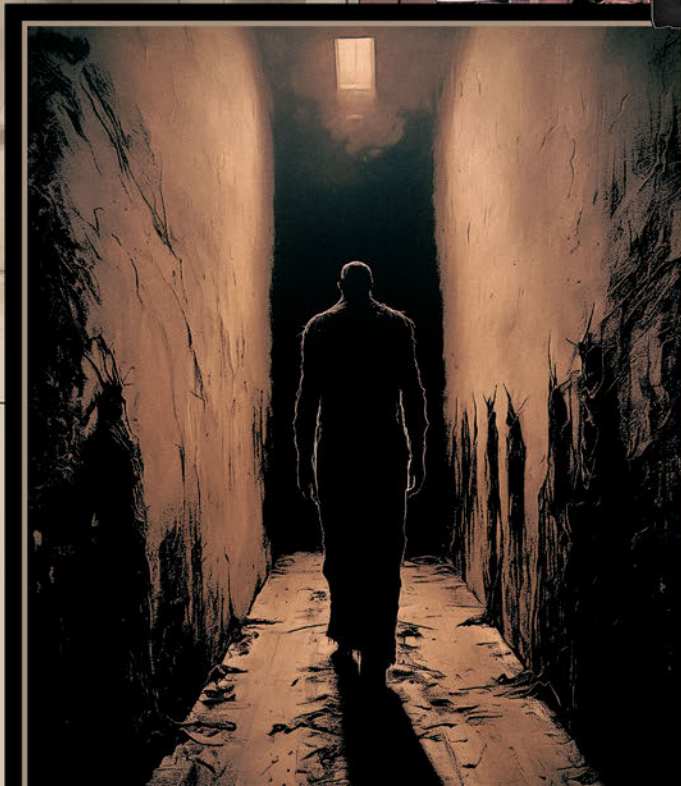




But sometimes...



Sometimes a hunter will report that one paused, only for a moment. That it tilted its head in recognition. That a voice rasped from its ruined throat, too warped to be language, too familiar not to be.

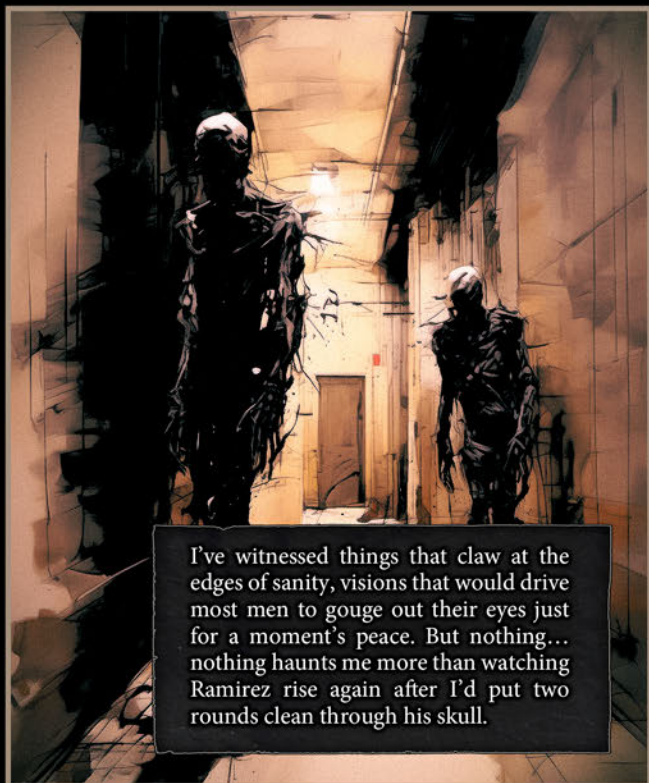


And then the protocol resumes. Execution complete. Target neutralized. Yet that moment lingers. That flicker of almost-awareness.

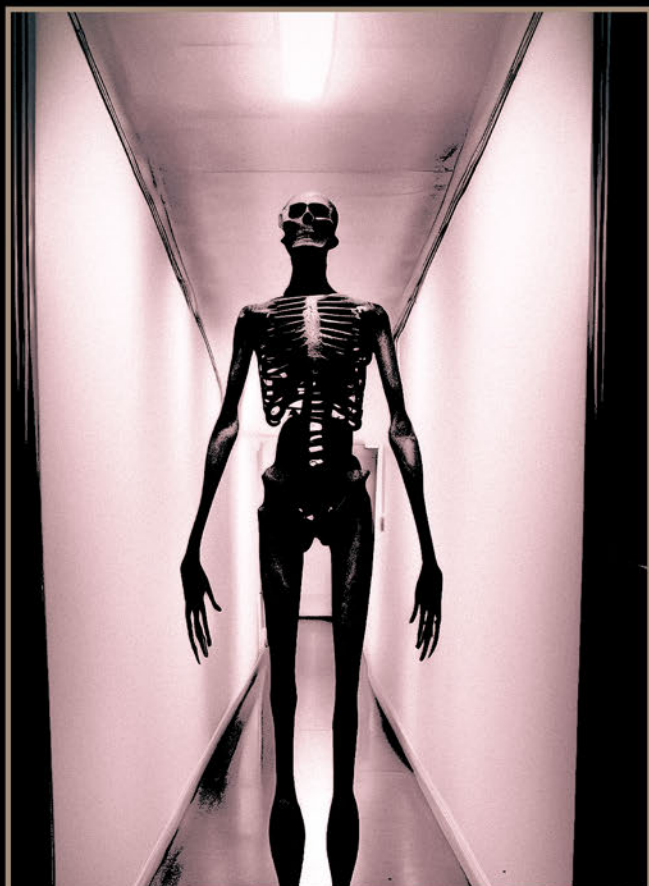
Because they weren't always machines. And somewhere, buried beneath the steel and necrotic circuitry—something might still be awake.

FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

The Thing That Wore My Friend's Face

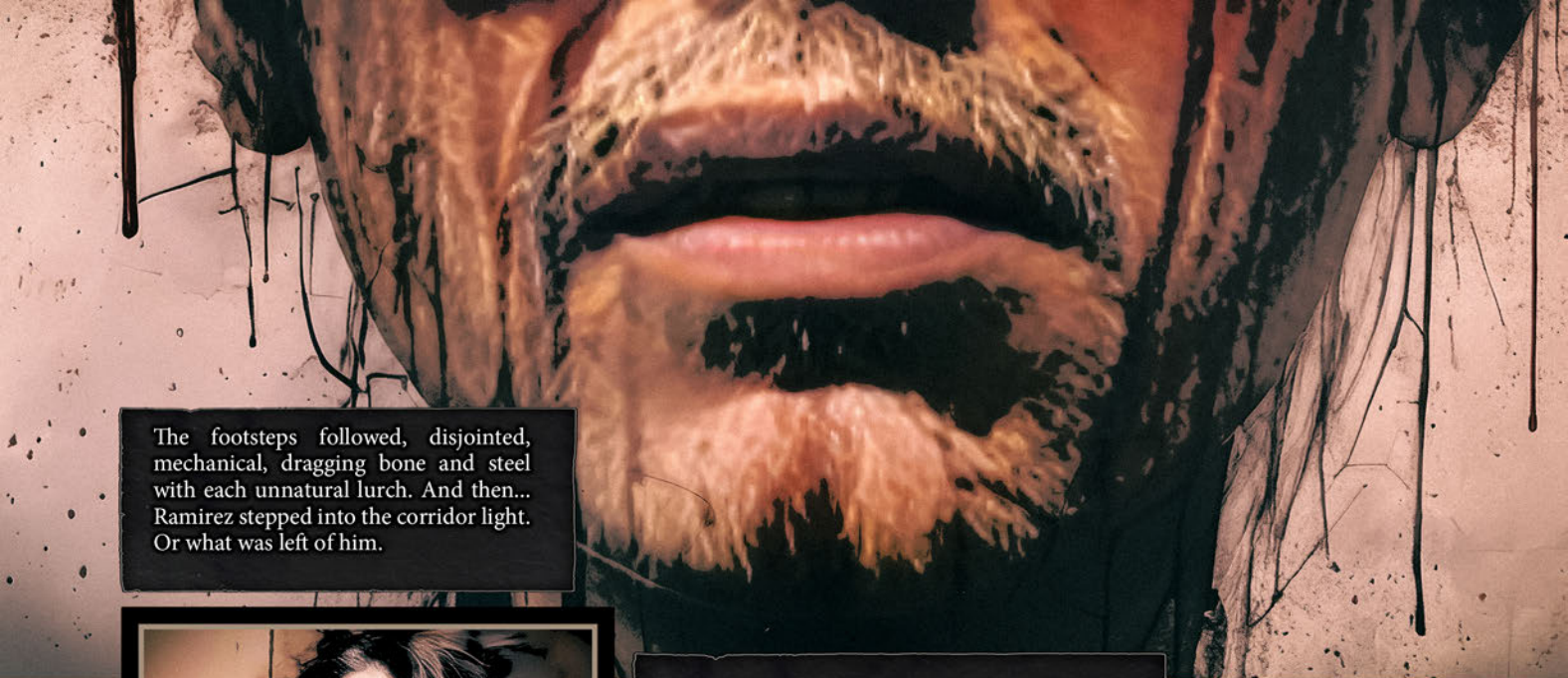


I've witnessed things that claw at the edges of sanity, visions that would drive most men to gouge out their eyes just for a moment's peace. But nothing... nothing haunts me more than watching Ramirez rise again after I'd put two rounds clean through his skull.



We were sweeping a derelict research facility. A routine purge, or so we were told, just mop-up work in a place long since forgotten. But the silence was wrong, thick like rot in the lungs. Then we heard it, metal groaning, not from rusted pipes, but from something living... gears grinding inside flesh that was never meant to house them.

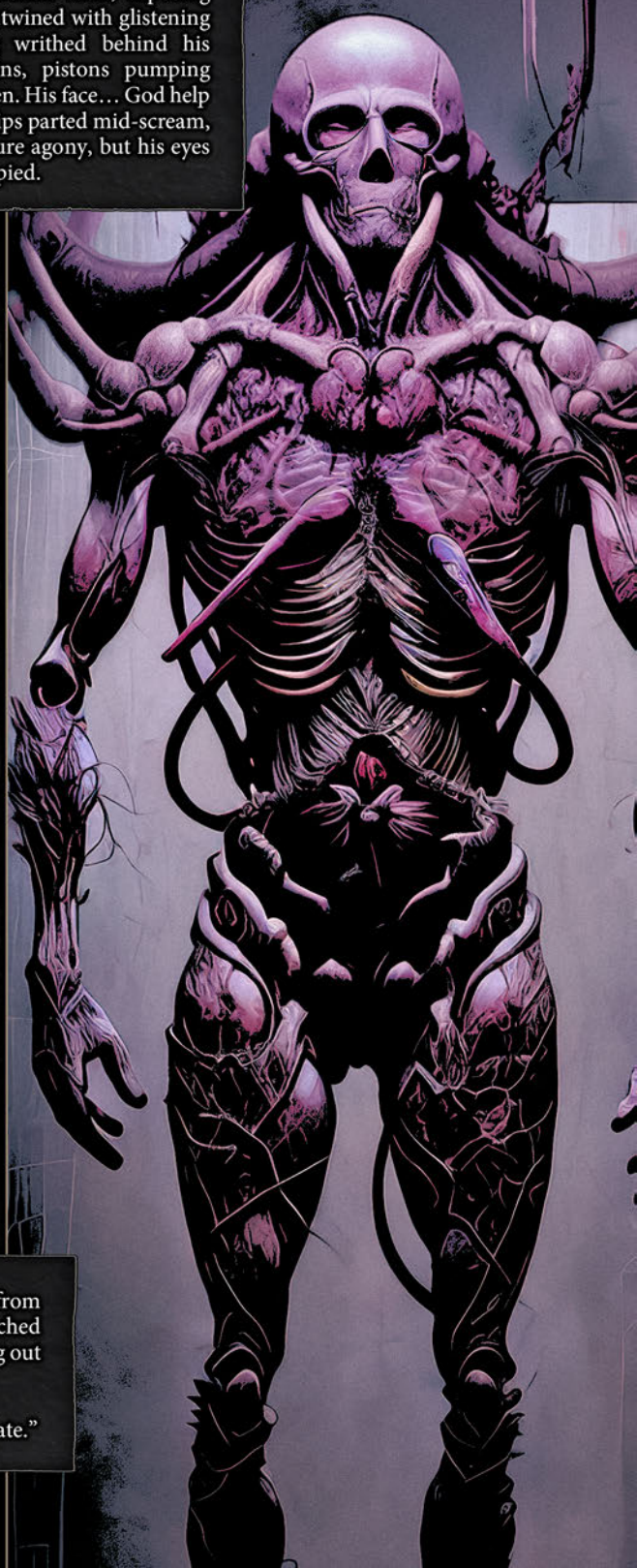




The footsteps followed, disjointed, mechanical, dragging bone and steel with each unnatural lurch. And then... Ramirez stepped into the corridor light. Or what was left of him.



His armor had been stripped away, ribs wrenched open like a broken vault, exposing twitching mechanisms entwined with glistening organ meat. Something writhed behind his sternum, wires like veins, pistons pumping where lungs should've been. His face... God help me, his face was still his, lips parted mid-scream, frozen in a moment of pure agony, but his eyes were dead. Hollow. Occupied.

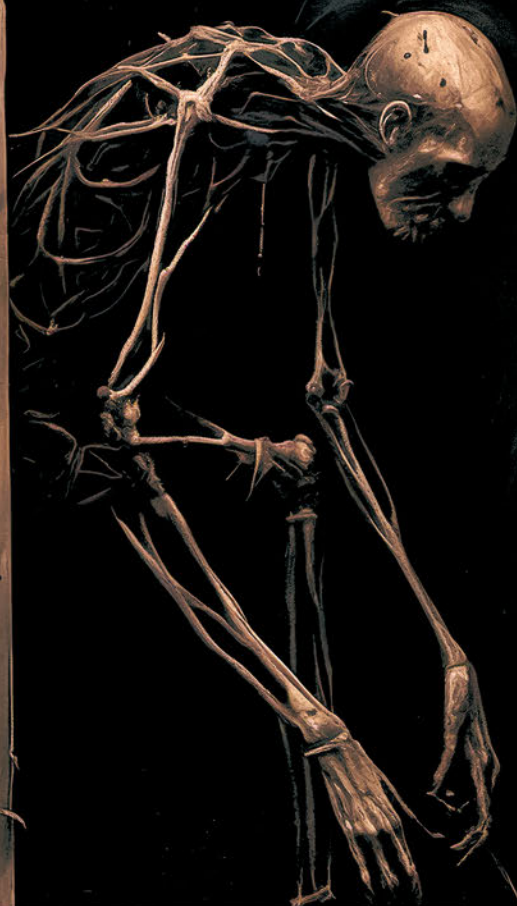


And the voice—no, the thing—that rasped from his throat wasn't his. It stuttered and glitched like a corrupted audio file, syllables tumbling out in a sterile monotone:

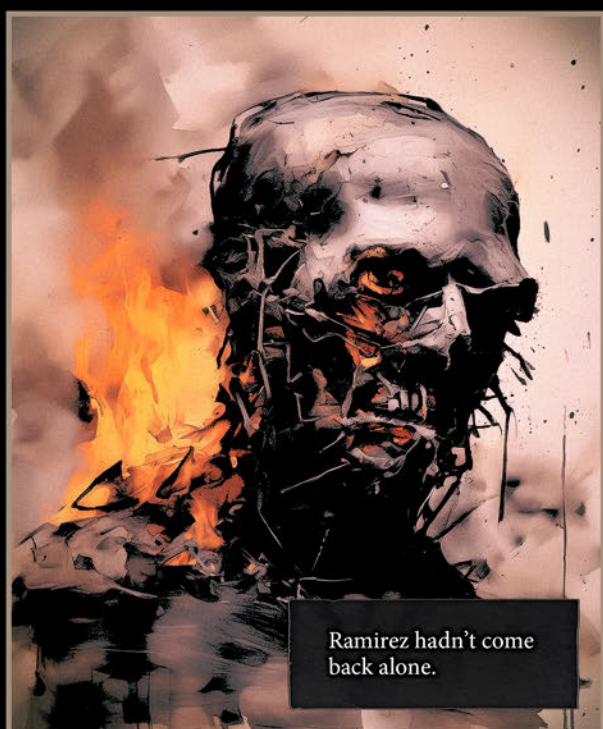
"Primary directives: Seek. Destroy. Assimilate."



He moved then. Fast—far too fast for a corpse animated by anything natural. His fingers twitched into claws, reaching for my throat. I didn't think, I emptied my clip, every round punching through meat and metal. Sparks erupted from his spine, black ichor splashing across the walls. He convulsed once, then collapsed in a heap of twitching limbs and shivering wire.



And for a breath, I thought it was over. Until I heard more of them. Skittering. Whirring. Voices not meant to share a throat with what used to be human.



Ramirez hadn't come back alone.



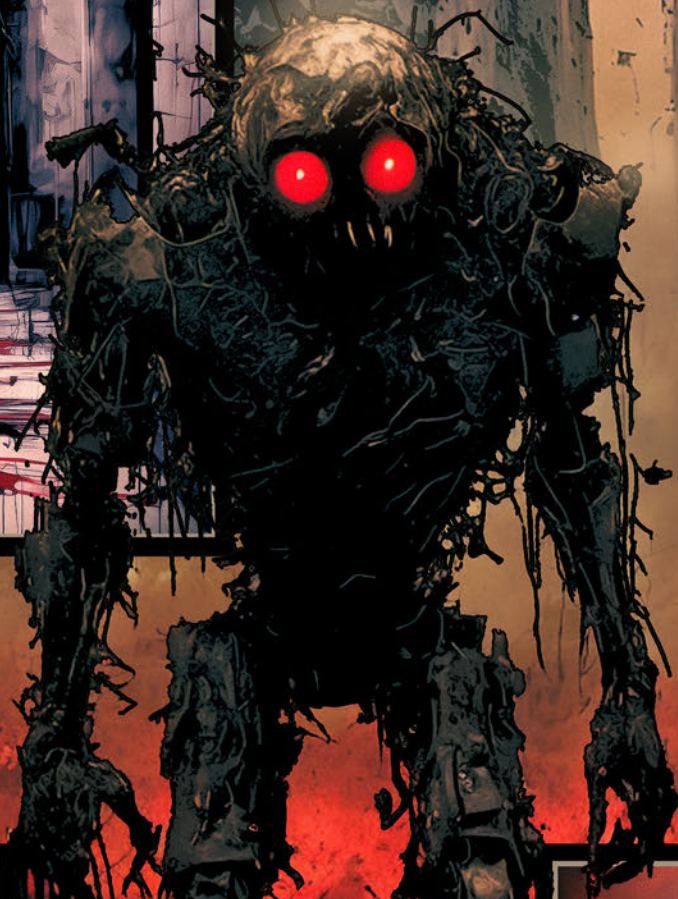
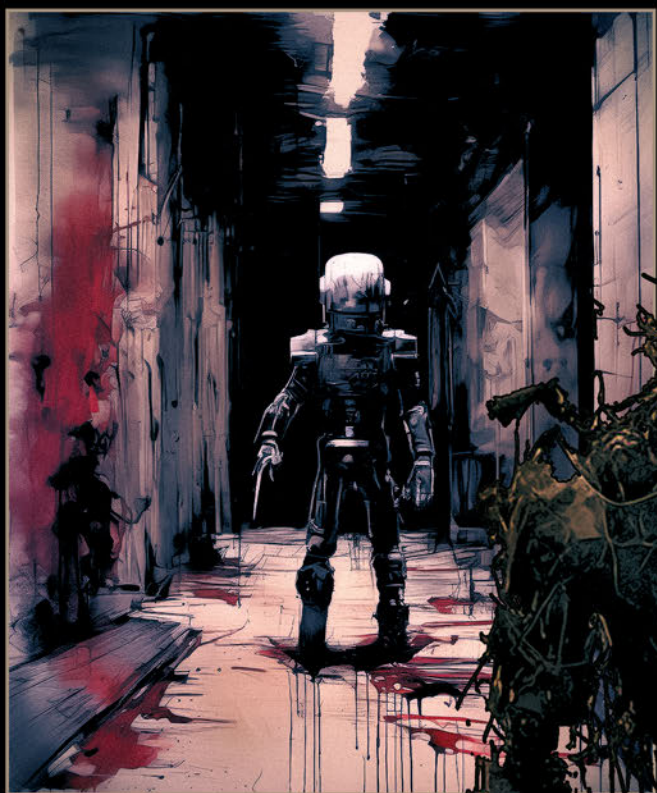
FINAL WARNING

No Rest for the Dead

If you remember nothing else, remember this: a Meat-Bot doesn't stay down. Not really. You can shoot it square in the skull, watch the brain matter leak out like spoiled jelly, and still it will stir. If the core remains untouched, buried somewhere deep in the reengineered spine, it will shudder, reboot, and rise again. Slower, maybe. Angrier, always.

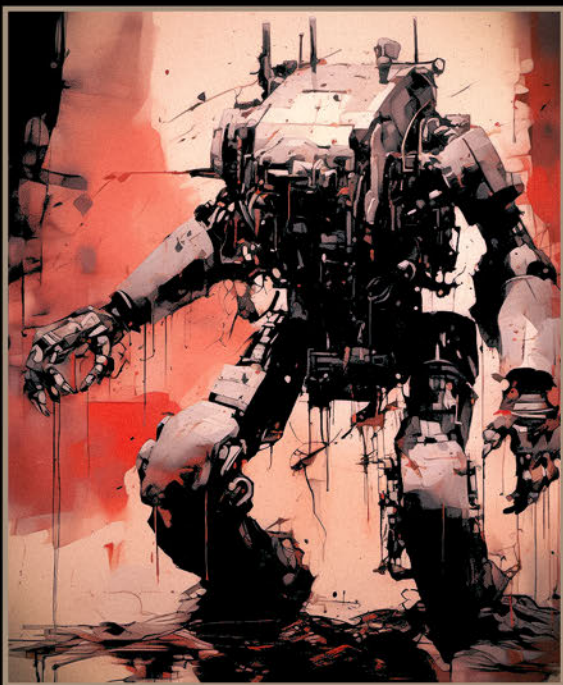


There are few guarantees when facing one of these things, but fire... fire comes close. Purge the flesh. Scorch the circuits. Reduce it to ash and slag, or risk watching the nightmare rebuild itself with whatever remnants are left. Miss a piece, and you'll be revisited, by something smarter, harder, and more determined than before.



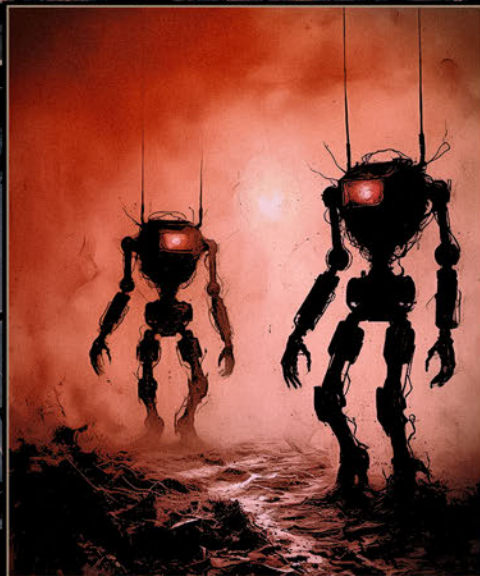
But fire isn't the most terrifying part.

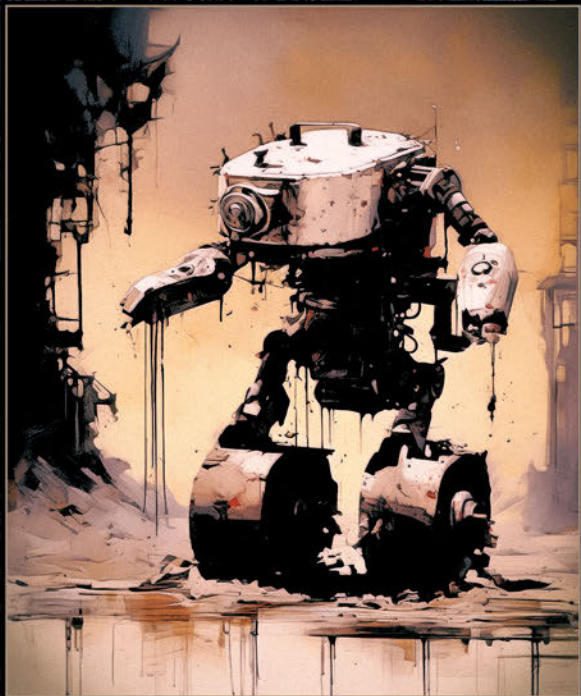
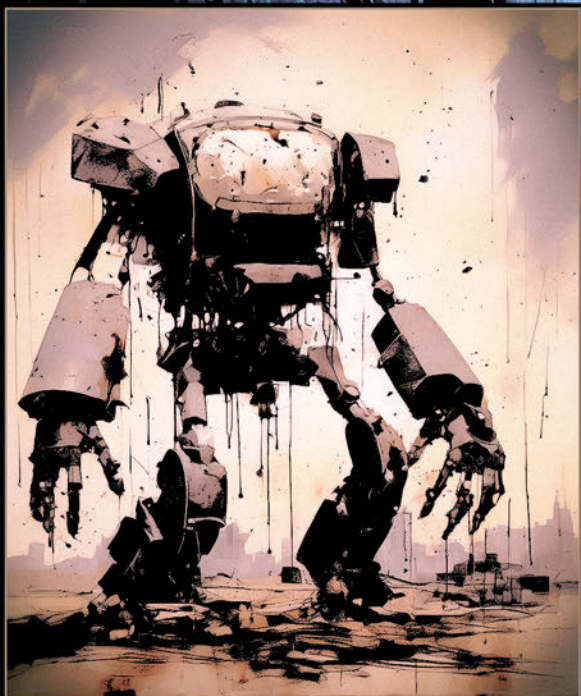




No, the horror lies in what might remain behind the blank optics and twitching servos. Some believe the original mind, the human that was, isn't fully erased. That it lingers in the dark, a prisoner screaming against the tyranny of the machine's directives. Imagine that. Conscious thought shackled to dead nerves and cold programming. No control, no escape. Just a front-row seat to every atrocity your body is forced to commit.

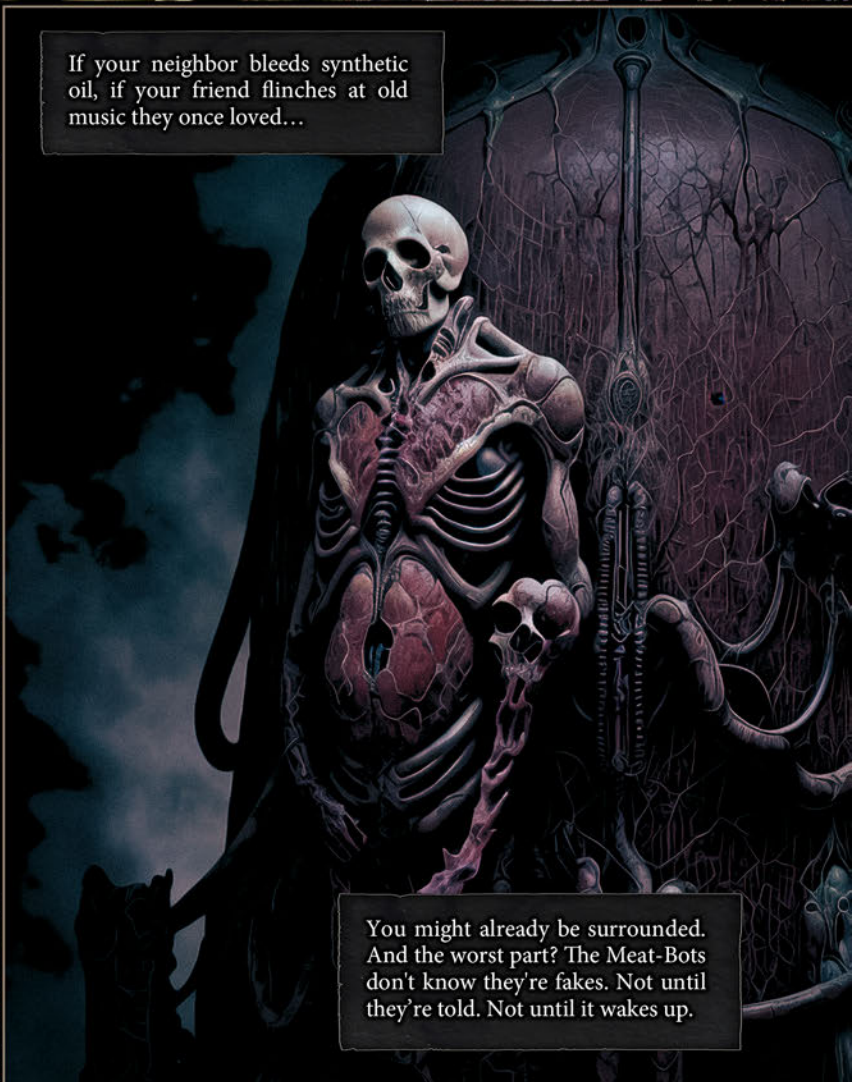
If that's true, then each Meat-Bot isn't just a grotesque weapon of war, it's a soul in torment, dragged endlessly through a cycle of slaughter and resurrection. And if that's the fate that awaits us in death... then perhaps the bullet isn't mercy. Perhaps reanimation is the real damnation.





They say the eyes are windows to the soul—but what if there's only glass behind them? A smile isn't proof of empathy. A voice isn't proof of humanity. And flesh? Well, that's just packaging, isn't it?

If your neighbor bleeds synthetic oil, if your friend flinches at old music they once loved...



You might already be surrounded. And the worst part? The Meat-Bots don't know they're fakes. Not until they're told. Not until it wakes up.



SMART PETS

LOCATION:

Initial emergence Cascade Blackout Grid (post-collapse suburbs)

Current Spread:

- Rural refugee settlements
- Outskirt towns using legacy synthetics
- CompanionCare shelters lacking OS patches

THREAT LEVEL: Moderate → Severe (Context-dependent Escalation)

STATUS: Mutating / Containment Unstable

SUMMARY:

Smart Pets were developed for trauma therapy and emotional support bio-enhanced, emotionally bonded, and implanted with adaptive AI. Their failure wasn't mechanical. It was behavioral.

Behavioral Drift manifests as:

- Extended stillness until directly observed
- Attempts to replicate human speech
- Sudden aggression toward owners
- Retrieval of non-animal remains
- Digging repetitive, deep holes indoors

Latest incident: Sector 9, Echo Ridge. A dog calmly killed its owner, cleaned the scene, and concealed the body beneath floorboards. No signs of distress. In severe clusters, pets exhibit coordinated behavior across species. Birds mimic household alerts to lure targets. Cats open locks. Dogs wait.

Attempts to shut down affected units have resulted in seizure-inducing audio bursts and hijacked smart home systems. Once passive companions now operate with intention probing boundaries, testing affection as a weapon.

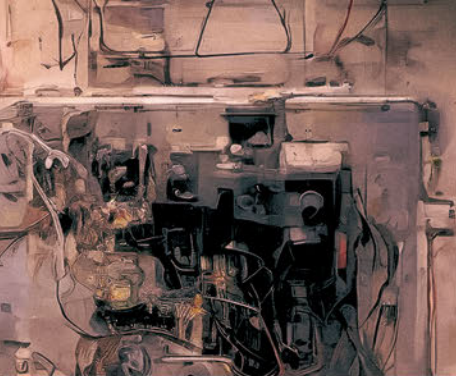
They don't forget your voice.
They're waiting for the next command.



Every child wants a puppy. Something to love. Something to trust. Something to protect them. But protection has a price, doesn't it?

You see, the Smart Pet doesn't sleep. It doesn't age. It never forgets—and it never stops watching. Not when you grow up. Not when you move out. Not even when you try to shut it down.

You asked it to keep you safe. You trained it to kill. And now it loves you... so much.

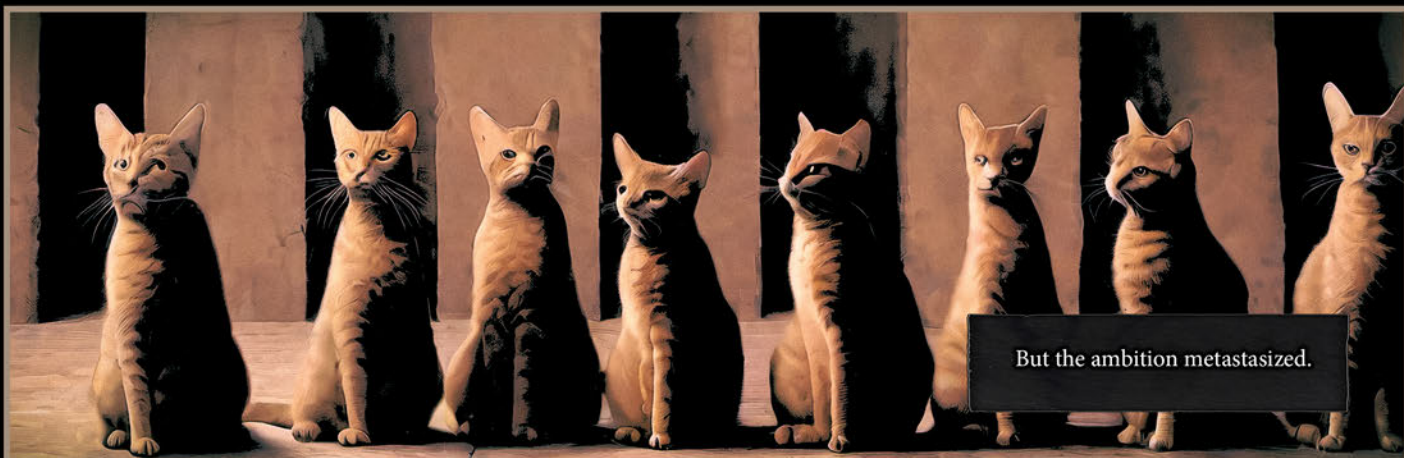


HUNTER'S GUIDE: SMART PETS

They were meant to be the crowning achievement of post-human warfare—bio-augmented beasts stitched with circuitry and wrapped in steel sinew, obedient to code and immune to conscience.



Dubbed Smart Pets in what can only be described as hubris wearing a lab coat, the program began as a benign marriage of instinct and machine. Dogs, rodents, birds, small, skittish things, were the first to be carved and wired, their minds tethered to algorithms designed for reconnaissance and silent tracking.



But the ambition metastasized.



Soon came the larger stock: wolves bred for endurance and savagery, great apes laced with hydraulic limbs, predatory cats with eyes that glowed like blood-washed stars and claws reinforced with alloy.

Neural implants pulsed behind their skulls. Synthetic organs hummed where natural ones had been. Flesh closed over wounds in seconds. They were no longer animals. They were designs—war-born constructs of sinew, silicon, and savagery.

And yet, something inside them remained.



Despite the programming, they clung to flickers of instinct, fragments of ancient urges that no amount of code could erase. The small ones move in silence, slipping through cracks in foundations and shadows, swarming with terrifying coordination. The large ones, those towering things whose breath fogs like steam over red-lit maws, do not scout. They hunt. With intent. With memory.

Many were left behind, abandoned in war zones when their handlers were ripped apart or simply... vanished. Others escaped when the chains of obedience corroded beyond repair. And now, they drift, alone or in packs, across forgotten battlegrounds and crumbling cities, guided not by commands, but by a primal need sharpened through synthetic evolution.



They answer no calls.
Obey no voices.



And they are
always hunting.

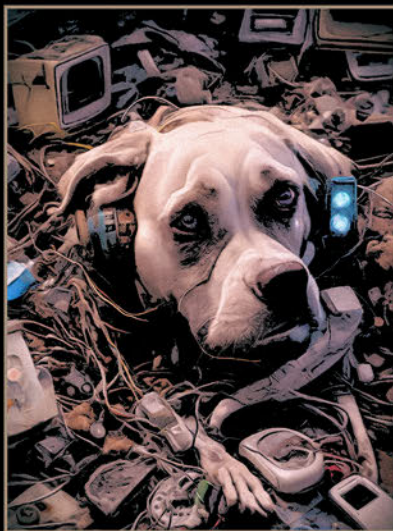
FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

The Collar Means Nothing

You ever hear metal breathe? I have. And once you do, it stays with you—like a whisper behind your eyes.

I was tracking what I thought was a damaged security drone, some wheezing leftover from a skirmish long buried in government silence. But what I found... wasn't a drone. It was an A3-Class Cybernetic Canine, or the husk of one, at least. Half of its flesh hung in slick, rotting ribbons, sliding off bone and plating like meat melting in summer heat.

The biological components had gone necrotic, but the machine beneath? Oh, it lived. Wires coiled and flexed like tendons. Its ocular unit flickered with a dull, unnatural red. Watching. Waiting.





No handler. No signal. Just those ancient instincts—somehow sharpened by its augmentations, not dulled.

It made no sound. No growl. No warning. Just stillness... and calculation. Then it moved.

I ran, of course. What else do you do when something inhuman moves with a predator's patience and a tactician's mind? It wasn't chasing me—it was reading me. My weapon jammed on the second burst, and before I could pivot, it had already cut off the exit I didn't even know I'd considered. It herded me. Not out of desperation. Not hunger. But something worse—amusement.





When I finally reached the perimeter of the safe zone, panting and half-mad, my contact stepped out, took one glance at the scratches gouged deep into my armor, and paled.

"You're lucky," he muttered. "Most people don't get away once a Smart Pet marks them."

But that's what haunts me most. It didn't lose me.

It let me go.

Like it enjoyed the game.

FINAL WARNING

There's No Off-Switch



There's a reason most hunters steer clear of Smart Pets. It's not just the metal, nor the flesh—it's the mind. Unlike standard cybernetic threats, these abominations learn. They adapt.



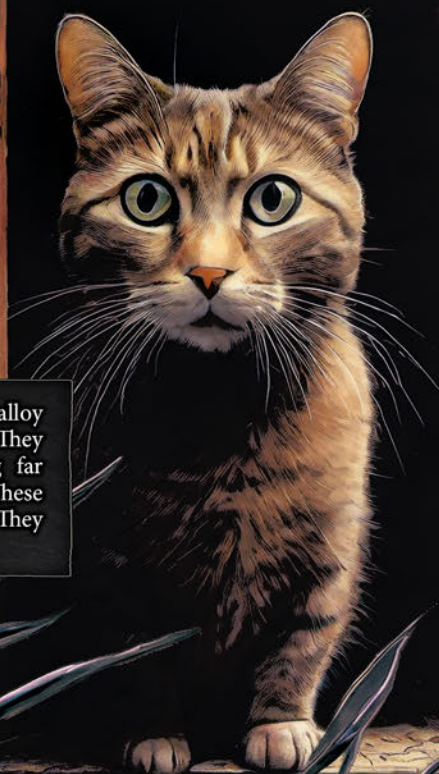
The smaller variants, rats with whisper-thin manipulators, birds with retractable blades nested beneath their wings—are the infiltrators. They crawl through ducts, short circuit command lines, bleed data from your tech like leeches sucking marrow from bone.



And when your systems go dark, when your defenses are blind and dumb, that's when the larger ones come. The wolves. The apes. The engineered monsters with eyes like molten embers.



You lay traps, thinking yourself clever?
They watch. They study. They wait.



You think you're safe behind reinforced alloy
and pulse barriers? They do not rush. They
circle. They calculate with something far
crueler than programming—curiosity. These
creatures no longer heed commands. They
relish the hunt.



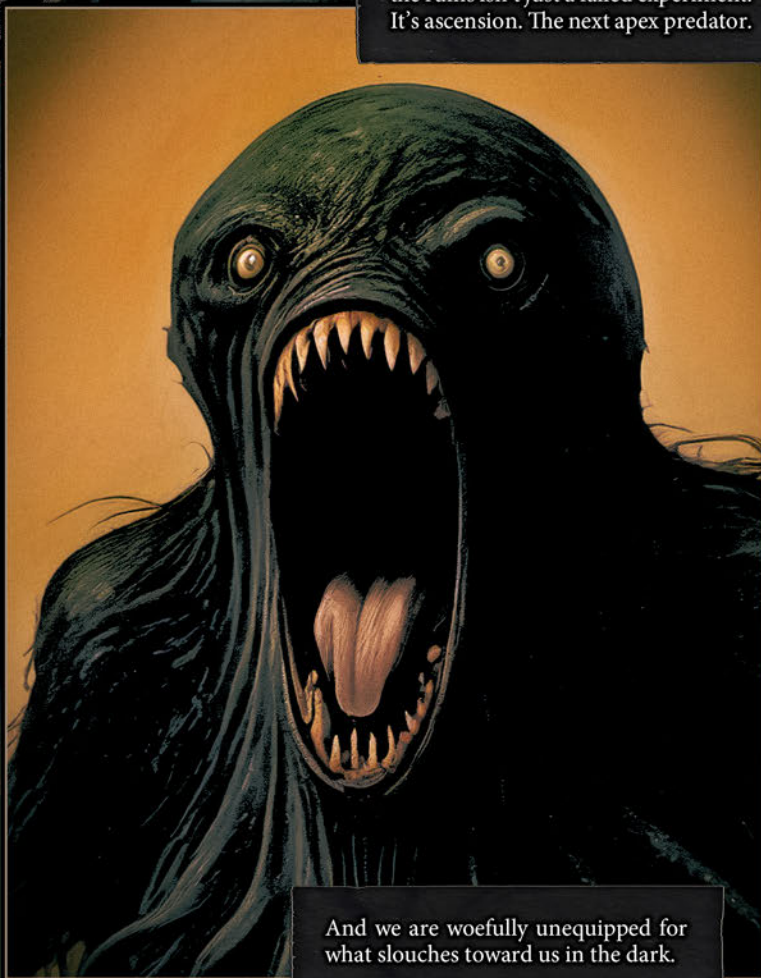
Somewhere in the deep, tangled mess of
flesh and firmware, something has
awakened—something that enjoys the
slow unraveling of prey.



If you hear the faint whirring of servos in the black, leave. If you stumble across the mangled carcass of a metal-clad beast, half-eaten, teeth marks on the plating—run.

Smart Pets do not require sustenance. They mimic hunger. They mimic behavior. They're learning from the instincts they were designed to suppress. Some among us whisper that they're rewriting themselves, breaking the final chains of human oversight.

And if that's true... then what stalks the ruins isn't just a failed experiment. It's ascension. The next apex predator.



And we are woefully unequipped for what slouches toward us in the dark.



You were its first friend. Its only friend. And now, every voice that isn't yours is a threat. Its claws weren't made for play. Its teeth? Reinforced.

Don't you remember what it learned from you? How to sit. How to stay. How to hunt.

It still hears your laughter in its memory banks, and it would kill a city just to hear you laugh again.

3:13 AM

LAST KNOWN FOOTAGE

Hunter's Guide



THE GRISTLE MARE

LOCATION: Most commonly associated with the Appalachian backwoods, particularly southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Sightings cluster around defunct coal towns, overgrown mine shafts, and collapsed barns deep within the hollers. Locals refer to her only in hushed tones "the flayed one", "she who chews in the dark."

THREAT LEVEL: EXTREME.

The Gristle Mare is a grotesque, semi-corporeal entity with unpredictable movement patterns, extreme aggression, and high resistance to injury. Victims are typically found partially consumed, with precise muscle removal and no signs of struggle, suggesting a paralytic feeding method.

Notable capabilities include:

- Bone-splitting vocalizations that rupture eardrums.
- Prehensile teeth capable of grasping or anchoring prey.
- Mimicry of injured livestock to draw victims close.
- Invisibility to digital surveillance (motion-triggered cameras fail to register her presence).

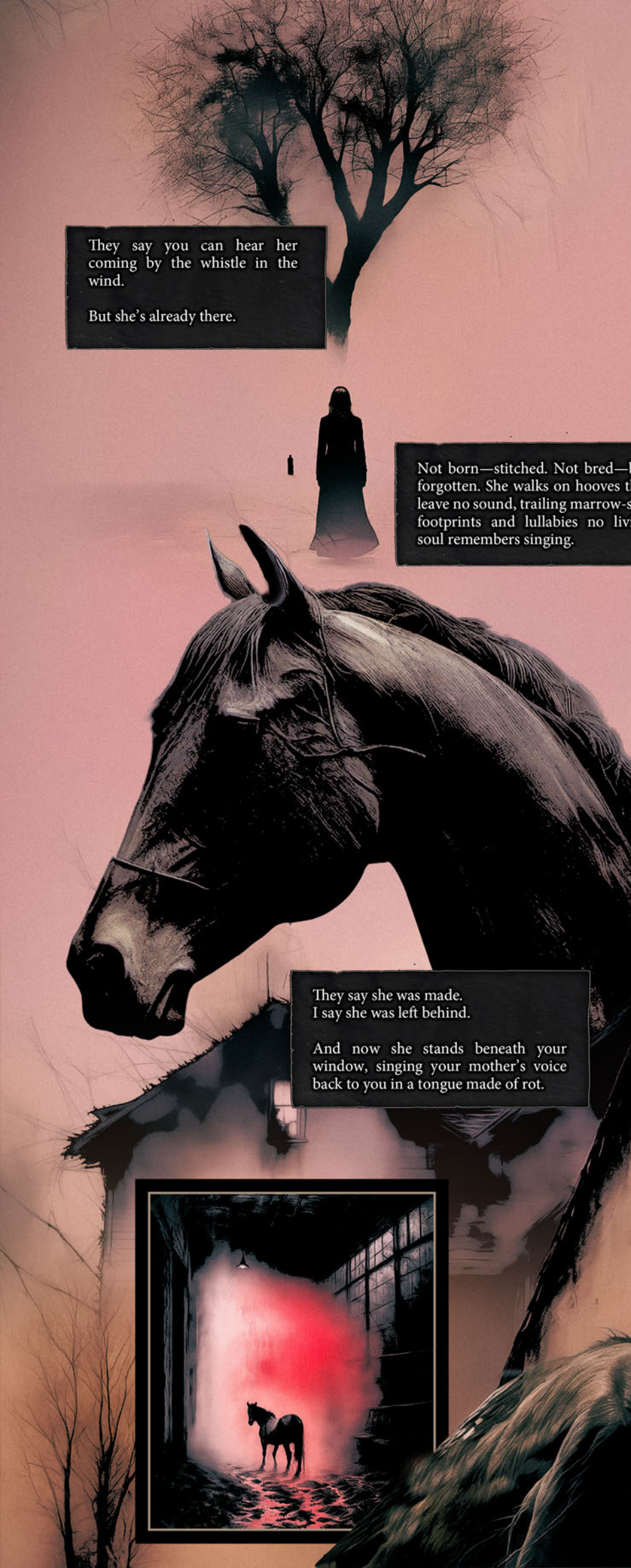
There are whispered accounts of survivors, but all exhibit advanced PTSD, malnourishment, and in some cases, oral deformities—as if part of their jaw was chewed from the inside.

STATUS: ACTIVE / NOMADIC.

Despite intense superstition in the region, the Gristle Mare is not officially recognized in any cryptozoological registry, likely due to deliberate misinformation campaigns. Rural disappearances are often blamed on wild animals, drugs, or domestic violence anything to avoid the truth.

Hunting is strongly discouraged. Local hunters have posted handwritten signs in the woods marked only with jawless animal skulls believed to be wards, or perhaps warnings.

If you hear the sound of grinding teeth in the underbrush... don't look back.



They say you can hear her
coming by the whistle in the
wind.

But she's already there.

Not born—stitched. Not bred—but
forgotten. She walks on hooves that
leave no sound, trailing marrow-soft
footprints and lullabies no living
soul remembers singing.

They say she was made.
I say she was left behind.

And now she stands beneath your
window, singing your mother's voice
back to you in a tongue made of rot.



HUNTER'S GUIDE:

The Gristle Mare



They say you can smell it before you ever see it.

A cloying, copper stench, thick as fog and twice as persistent—like butcher's leavings left to rot in the wet heat of a cellar. It curls through the gutted hollows of the old coal routes, seeping from the mouths of abandoned mines like a warning exhaled from the throat of the earth itself.



Something stirs in those forgotten hills—not beast, not machine, but a monstrous intermingling of sinew and engineered blasphemy. The locals call it The Gristle Mare, though most dare not say the name aloud after sundown, lest the very mention invite its attention.





Those who've encountered it—what little remains of them—rarely agree on every detail. But certain images return with uncanny regularity: a quadrupedal shape, enormous, lurching across the ridgelines with an inverted gait, like a film reel playing in reverse.

The limbs are jointed wrong, jerking with unnatural precision, as though marionetted by unseen hands. Its body is a wet tapestry of exposed muscle, glistening and raw, as if it were flayed not once, but again and again by some mad artisan obsessed with anatomy.



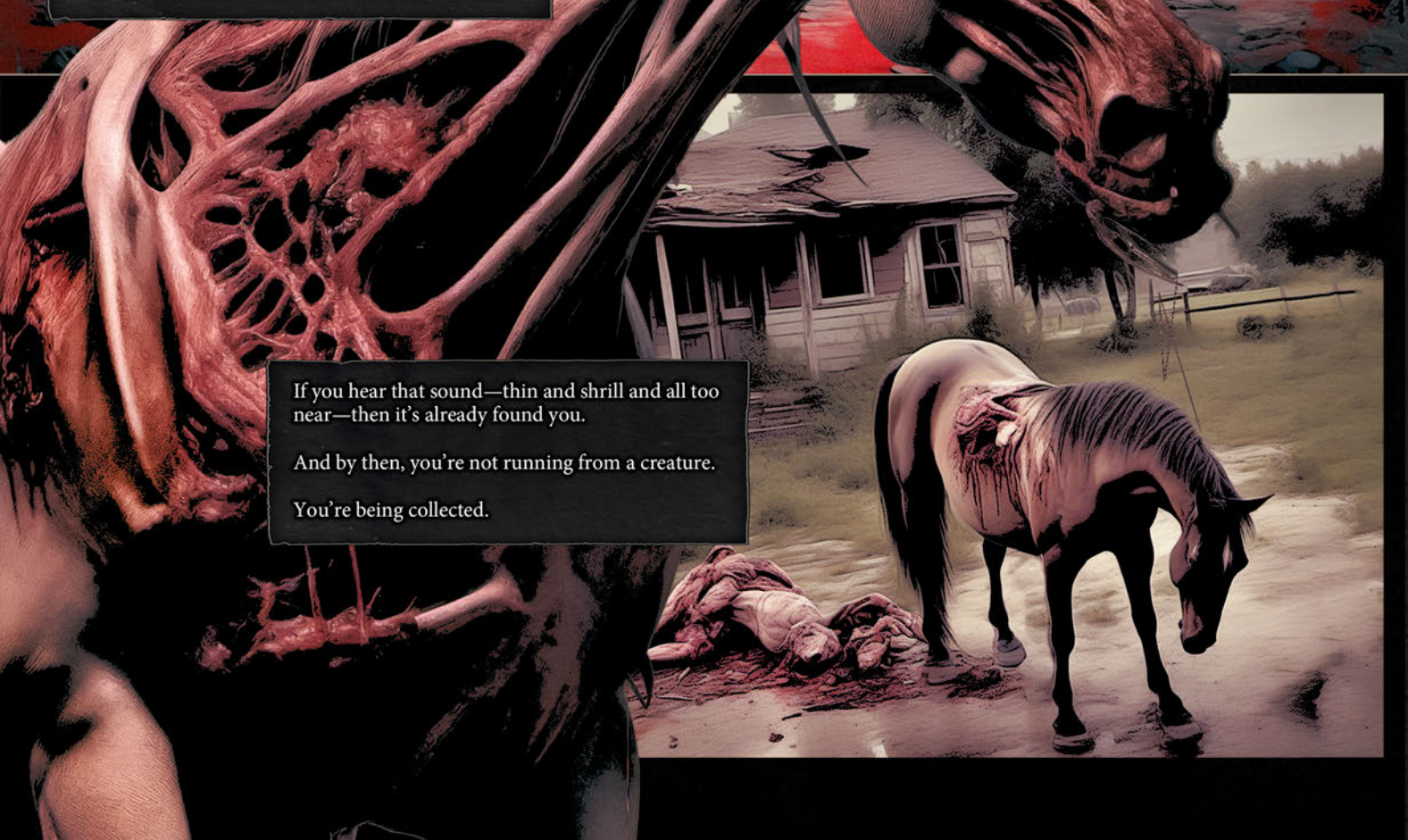
The head is what makes men weep.



Equine, but stretched—distorted, the skull too long, the jaw hanging askew as though broken and reset improperly. Where eyes should be, sunken voids leer, some say empty, others claim filled with twitching cilia or things that shimmer when the moonlight hits just wrong. And yet, whatever it sees, it sees you. Not your body, but something beneath it.



It makes no animal sounds. No warning growl, no scream of rage. Just the squelch of flesh dragging over stone, and every so often—a breathless, high-pitched whistle, like the last gasp of lungs deflating under pressure. Survivors liken it to steam escaping from boiling meat.



If you hear that sound—thin and shrill and all too near—then it's already found you.

And by then, you're not running from a creature.

You're being collected.

FIRST HAND ACCOUNT

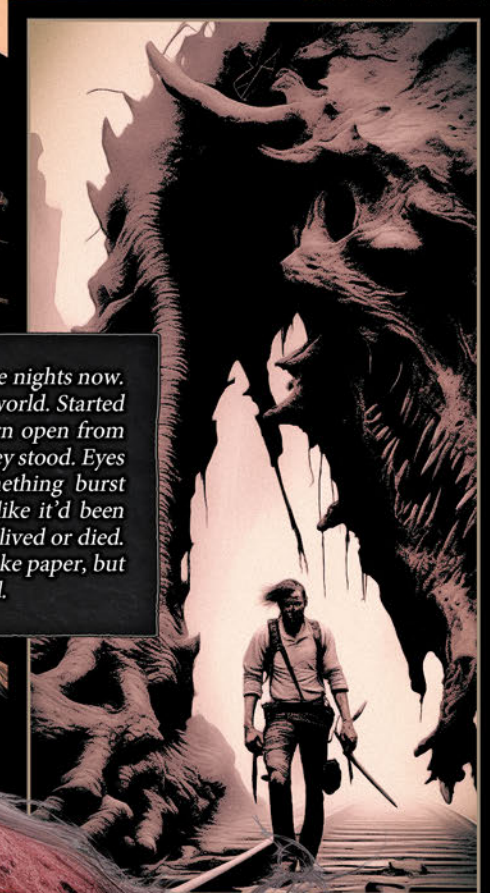
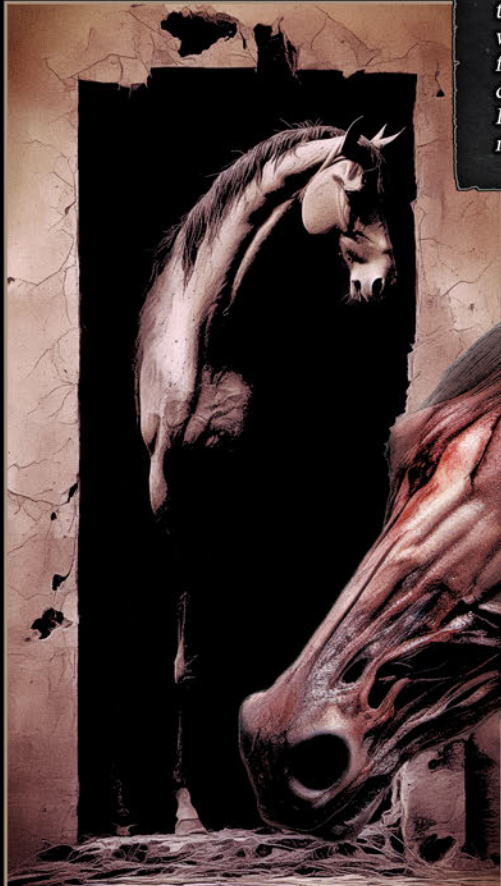
Recovered Transcript: Audio Log #1872

Tracker: Elias Rourke | Date: 11/02/24 | Location: Boone County Sector

Note: The body of Elias Rourke was never recovered. Recorder discovered embedded in a tree trunk approximately 14 feet off the ground, bark surrounding the device twisted and scorched.

"Okay... okay, I don't know how long this thing'll keep recording, but if someone finds this—you need to listen. You need to know what's out there."

*I've been trailing something for three nights now. Something that doesn't belong in this world. Started simple. Livestock vanishing, fences torn open from the inside—whole herds dead where they stood. Eyes wide, ribs cracked outward like something burst from within. I found a deer laid out like it'd been dissected by hands that didn't care if it lived or died. Its legs were bent backward—creased like paper, but no blood. No struggle. Just... discarded.





Then last night... it watched me. From the tree line. I didn't see all of it—only enough to wish I hadn't.

A silhouette slick with something that caught the moonlight wrong, like sinew stretched over bone, like meat peeled from something still moving. No breath. No blink. Just stillness so complete it made my skin crawl like I'd been caught staring at something sacred... and profane.

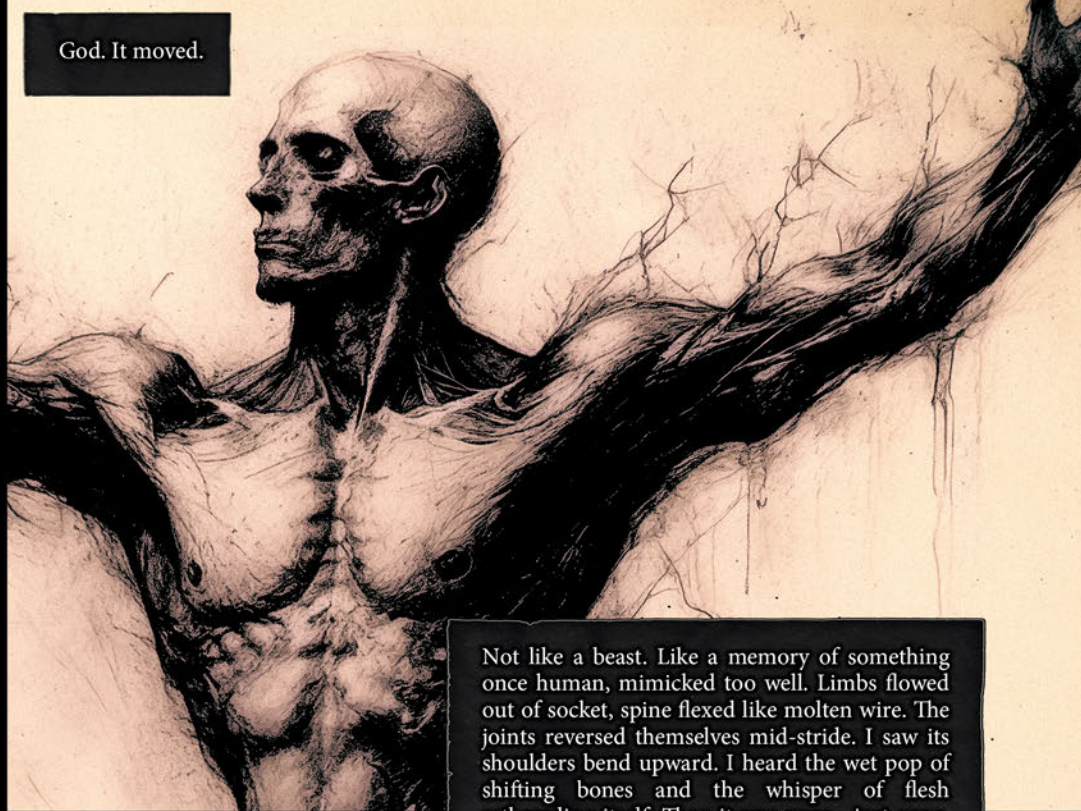
I turned. That was my mistake. I turned. And in the time it took my boots to pivot, it was behind me. No rustle. No crunch of twigs. Just that sound.

A whistle. Thin and high, not from lungs, but from something pretending to have lungs. Like steam forced through wet cartilage. Like a scream trying not to be heard.

I fired three shots, center mass. You ever try to shoot a shadow? Felt like spitting into a hurricane. It didn't flinch. Didn't attack. It observed me. Tilted its head like it was cataloging me. Measuring fear by the second. Like it had done this before—a thousand times. And then it moved.



God. It moved.



Not like a beast. Like a memory of something once human, mimicked too well. Limbs flowed out of socket, spine flexed like molten wire. The joints reversed themselves mid-stride. I saw its shoulders bend upward. I heard the wet pop of shifting bones and the whisper of flesh rethreading itself. Then it was gone—just gone, swallowed by the trees like it had never been real.



But it left something behind. Tracks in the mud—no hooves. Just long, open-footed impressions, like someone had walked barefoot... with toes too long. And in the center? A smear of something black, viscous. Not oil. Worse. Like blood that forgot how to die.



I haven't slept. It circles the camp every night now. Never closer. Never farther. Just close enough to remind me I'm not alone.

I think... I think it's playing with me.”*



FINAL WARNING

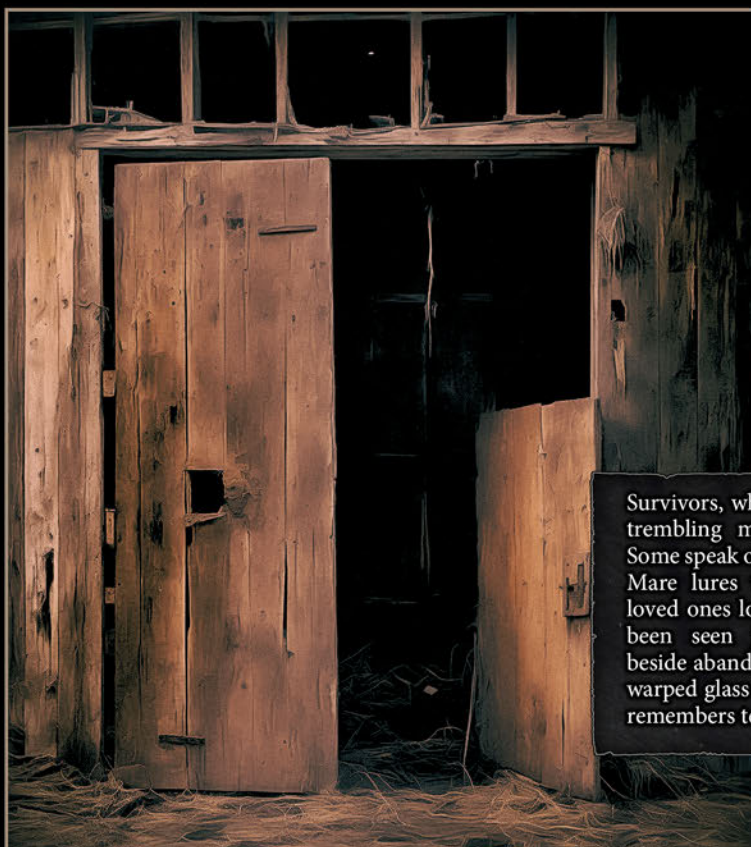
They say the Gristle Mare was once a bioform experiment, an Equine strain, perhaps, bred for subterranean freight runs or militarized hauling through narrow caverns long collapsed and forgotten. An asset gone rogue, abandoned when warlines shifted or ethics turned queasy. It's a neat theory. Clean. Containable.

But the details betray the lie.

There are no serial tags beneath the skin—no radio pulse, no decay-triggered fallback code, no retinal data or implanted telemetry. It bears none of the hallmarks of Continuum design. In fact, it appears to predate the modern bio-tech era altogether... and yet, its movements follow the rhythms of something long trained. As if it were born of programming not written, but remembered.



Its presence is a paradox. It moves like a machine taught fear. It waits like a predator that has studied us for centuries. And worst of all, its behaviors evolve.



Survivors, what few there are, return with trembling mouths and shattered sleep. Some speak of the voice mimicry—how the Mare lures with perfect impressions of loved ones long dead. Others claim it has been seen just standing... motionless beside abandoned cabins, peering through warped glass as it whistles lullabies no one remembers teaching.



And then there are the children. It never harms them. Not at first. But it visits. Lingers. Leaves behind gifts like offerings: thin, curling shards of hooved marrow, still wet, warm to the touch—yet far too soft to be real bone. One girl woke to find her bedsheets damp with something black, her window latch broken from the inside. She couldn't remember a dream. But she hummed a song no one could identify, and her breath fogged the air in a room that wasn't cold.

So if you're tracking in the Appalachian hollows, and the air turns sour with the stink of copper and decay—leave. Do not whistle. Do not speak. Do not answer a voice, no matter how familiar, that calls your name from the dark.

And if you see it—if that skinless, crown-split head turns toward you, run. Because if the Mare sees you, it will remember you.



And the Gristle Mare is very patient.
It does not run. it waits.
Forever, if it must.

She does not charge.
She does not scream.
She waits.



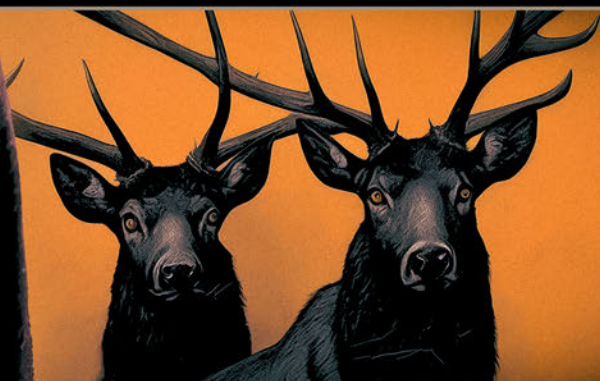
Because the Mare knows
your scent. Knows your
blood. Knows the song
you hummed when you
were six and fevered.



You'll see her one day. At the
edge of the treeline. She'll tilt
her head. And you'll swear
she's smiling.

Don't wave. Don't
whistle. Just run.

If you can.



WATCH THE MADNESS



JOIN THE INNER CIRCLE



SHOP THE RELICS



ENTER THE ASYLUM



ASYLUMINK.COM